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ABSTRACT

In this investigation of education, conducted in South West Africa/Namibia, it was found that the medium of instruction was one of the basic causes of the teaching and educational problems experienced at schools. In South West Africa/Namibia, several languages, including English and Afrikaans as official languages, are involved in the medium-of-instruction issue and children are exposed to several languages in the first few years of school. Other findings include these: (1) the child's native language appears to be the appropriate medium of instruction during the first 3 to 5 years; (2) the changeover to a foreign language as the medium of instruction should occur over a period of time and according to academic subject; and (3) when deciding on a policy regarding the medium of instruction, several factors should be determined, including which language makes communication in the occupational world possible, the foreign language used most in a specific region, and the foreign language that is understood and spoken best by people in a specific region. (MSE)

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The medium of instruction in developing countries

J.B. Haasbroek
Petro Botha

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Report 0-317

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J.B. Haasbroek
Petro Botha

Pretoria
Human Sciences Research Council
1989

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PREFACE

An investigation into education in South West Africa/Namibia revealed that the problems experienced with the medium of instruction were the underlying cause of educational problems experienced in schools (AGN Report 4, 1982). In order to address this problem the language situation in multilingual developing countries (countries in Africa and one country in the Far East) and in a few developed countries (European countries and Canada) was studied to determine how the language situation in schools in these countries is handled.

The following matters pertaining to the medium of instruction in schools of multilingual developing and a few developed countries are discussed in this report: views regarding the medium of instruction in multilingual countries, the results of experiments conducted to determine the most suitable medium of instruction, the language medium policy, language medium options, factors that influence the language policy in schools, the change-over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction, and the introduction of a foreign language as a subject in schools.

This report also sheds light on the various factors to be considered when a decision has to be reached on a language policy in schools. Consequently the various departments of education in South West Africa/Namibia can consult this report to find answers to problem questions regarding a language policy in their schools.

A special word of thanks is due to Dr D.A. Gresse (Director: Education), Dr L.B. Burger (Director: Research and Educational Auxiliary Services), Mr I.F.J. van der Merwe (Head: Education), Mr A.P. Loots (Education Planner) and Mr S.G. Pretorius (First Subject Advisor: Afrikaans) of the Department of National Education, South West Africa/Namibia for studying this report and endorsing its contents.

J.B. HAASBROEK
CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE: MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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'n Ondersoek na die onderwys wat deur 'n navorsingskomitee in Suidwes-Afrika/Namibië onderneem is, het bevind dat die onderrigmedium in skole die grondslag vorm van die onderwys- en opvoedingsprobleme wat in skole ervaar word. Die onderrigmediumprobleem in skole in Suidwes-Afrika/Namibië is egter kompleks omdat verskeie moedertale, asook Afrikaans en Engels as amptelike tale, in die gedrang kom wanneer oor 'n onderrigmediumbeleid in skole besluit moet word. Gedurende die eerste drie tot vier skooljaar is die moedertaal die medium van onderrig en word Afrikaans en Engels as vakke aangebied. Van die vierde tot vyfde skooljaar word Engels of Afrikaans die medium van onderrig in skole en word die ander amptelike taal en die moedertaal as vakke aangebied. Wat veral opval is die tale-oorbelading van leerlinge - veral gedurende die eerste drie skooljaar.

Die doel met die ondersoek was om 'n literatuurstudie te maak van ontwikkelende lande se beleid met betrekking tot die moedertaal as onderrigmedium, die oorskakeling na 'n vreemde taal as onderrigmedium en die inskakeling van 'n vreemde taal op skool, om vir sover dit moontlik is riglyne vir 'n onderrigmediumbeleid in die onderwys in SWA/Namibië daar te stel.

Die bevindings van die ondersoek is soos volg:

(i) Die moedertaal blyk die aangewese medium van onderrig gedurende die eerste drie tot vyf jaar van die primêre skool te wees.

(ii) Die oorskakeling na 'n vreemde taal as onderrigmedium behoort op vakgrondslag oor 'n bepaalde periode te geskied.

(iii) Wanneer daar oor 'n onderrigmedium besluit word, moet daar ten minste bepaal word -

* watter taal kommunikasie in die beroepswêreld moontlik maak,

* watter vreemde taal in 'n bepaalde streek die meeste gebruik word,

* watter vreemde taal in 'n streek deur die mense die beste verstaan en gepraat word.

Ten einde die probleme rondom 'n onderrigmedium in skole op te los, is dit nodig om onderrigmediummodelle eksperimenteel te toets.

ABSTRACT

In an investigation into education that was conducted in South-West Africa/Namibia by a research committee it was found that the medium of instruction was one of the basic causes of the teaching and educational problems experienced at schools. The problem of the medium of instruction at schools in South-West Africa/Namibia is complex because several mother tongues, including Afrikaans and English as official languages, are involved when a decision has to be taken on the medium of instruction at schools. During the first three to four school years a child's mother tongue is the medium of instruction and Afrikaans and English are offered as subjects. From the fourth or fifth school year Afrikaans or English becomes the medium of instruction and the other official language and the child's mother tongue are offered as subjects. Of particular interest here is the way in which pupils are overloaded with languages, especially during the first three school years.

The aim of the investigation was to study the relevant literature concerning the policy of developing countries on the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, the introduction of a foreign language at school and the change-over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction in order to provide guidelines as far as possible regarding the medium of instruction at schools in South-West Africa/Namibia.

The findings of the investigation were the following:

(i) A child's mother tongue seemed to be the appropriate medium of instruction during the first three to five years in primary school.

(ii) The change-over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction should occur over a period of time and on a subject basis.

(iii) When deciding on a policy regarding the medium of instruction the following matters should at least be determined:

* The language that makes communication in the occupational world possible,
* the foreign language that is used the most in a specific region,
* the foreign language that is understood and spoken the best by the people in a specific region.

In order to solve the problems concerning the medium of instruction in schools it is necessary to test models in this regard on an experimental basis.

CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM, AIM AND METHOD OF STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Department of National Education of SWA/Namibia requested the Institute for Educational Research to undertake research on a policy with regard to the medium of instruction for education in SWA/Namibia. This request arose from the report of the research committee of SWA/Namibia - report AGN 4 of 1982, entitled Ondersoek na die onderwys in SWA (translation: Inquiry into Education in SWA/Namibia) - which pointed out, *inter alia*, the following two problem areas:

(i) The unsatisfactory school readiness of school beginners which handicaps their progress at school, and

(ii) the problems surrounding mother tongue/medium of instruction in education which underlie the educational and teaching problems experienced.

Research has shown that children from a milieu that provided inadequate learning experiences, are on entering school not fully ready to commence with formal education. To address the problem of school readiness, the Institute for Educational Research designed a readiness programme for the first ten weeks of Substandard A, and in collaboration with the Department of National Education applied this programme in schools of the department.

Follow-up studies in respect of the school progress of pupils in Substandards A and B and Standard 1 who followed the programme in Substandard A indicate that the readiness programme improved pupils' school progress.

The problem of the medium of instruction (teaching medium) is complex. The reason is that several mother tongues would have to be considered when the authorities of SWA/Namibia have to formulate a policy on the medium of instruction. The two official languages, English and Afrikaans, would also have to be considered as media of instruction. The following remark by Duminy (1975: 30) shows the importance of choosing a medium of instruction for education: "It is language - that means of communication par excellence - that carries the whole teaching procedure."

1.2 THE LANGUAGE MEDIUM PROBLEM IN MULTILINGUAL COUNTRIES

In unilingual countries, obviously the language of the country which is the mother tongue, is accepted as the medium of instruction or teaching medium at school. In bilingual or multilingual countries, the authorities must decide which language will be the medium of instruction at school. Not only is language a daily means of communication between parents and children, or between members of a particular community or group, but also the medium through which man and therefore a child attributes significance to his world. Language

is a basic prerequisite for the development of the child. It is the medium through which the intellectual functions find expression and through which social intercourse between people is possible.

When a child starts school he does have language - his mother tongue - at his disposal. Although his mother tongue might be inadequate because his vocabulary is still limited, and his grammatical construction is still inadequate, he can in fact express his thoughts in language and make himself understood. He can also understand what is being said to him. In other words, he is able to communicate with his teachers and classmates. An important fact, however, is that teachers instruct pupils (children) through the medium of language, that is, the content (subject matter) of different subjects is introduced to the children through the medium of language and in this way their knowledge increases.

A child who is unable to control his language properly is linguistically handicapped and cannot make the most of the teaching situation because his inadequate linguistic ability (linguistic retardation) prevents him from understanding what he is being taught. The ability of a linguistically handicapped child *to understand his language, to use his language in dialogue and to read and write his language* will be inadequate and unsatisfactory. This will have a detrimental effect on his school work because he will have difficulty grasping what he learns. The outcome of this unsatisfactory linguistic ability is poor performance, failure and even early school leaving, that is, pupils' school careers suffer because of unsatisfactory linguistic ability.

Language as a means of communication at school is crucial for both teacher and pupil. If a child, because of inadequate (poor) mastery of a language, cannot understand the teacher, or if the teacher because of poor mastery of language cannot make himself understood to his pupils, teaching in the classroom situation will be unsuccessful. Learning problems, which are the outcome of poor language mastery, have a detrimental influence on the child's school career as well as on his postschool career. He cannot learn properly and progress at school, and therefore cannot fully prepare himself for the future.

The importance of language as a means of communication between people and at school as a medium of instruction is indisputable. The question arises, however, as to what the policy on the medium of instruction or the teaching medium should be in multilingual countries. In a unilingual country, the vernacular, which is also the mother tongue, is the language medium at social level in the business world, as well as the medium of instruction in the education system from primary to tertiary levels of education. If other languages are taught, they are taught as foreign languages, and as subjects for the sake of a knowledge of the languages.

In a multilingual country where various language groups are not isolated but are in daily contact, the important question is what language should be the medium of instruction at school to equip pupils after they have left school to cope in a multilingual community.

As far as the medium of instruction at school is concernad, overseas and local specialists* have two different opinions on the medium of instruction in the first three to four years of school (junior primary phase) in multilingual countries. The first group advocates the mother tongue as the medium of instruction while the second is in favour of a foreign language as the medium of instruction, especially one that makes provision for communication across and outside geographical boundaries.

When deciding on a language medium in multilingual countries, the following should be borne in mind:

(i) If a language, which is not the mother tongue, is introduced from school entry as the medium of instruction, pupils could experience home-school adaptation problems. This problem is especially relevant in cases where there is no or very little exposure to or acquaintance with the language after school hours.

(ii) If bilingualism is not properly established, people tend to mix their languages.

(iii) The mother tongue remains in a community or region the home language and is established for social use. *Hence the mother tongue should be taught as a subject throughout the pupil's school career to ensure that he retains his own culture.*

A study of the medium of instruction at the schools of the 11 education authorities in SWA/Namibia (see Table 1.1) shows that there are schools that have only one medium of instruction from Substandard A to Standard 10, while others have two languages as the medium of instruction at different stages of the education system. On the strength of the number of languages presented at school, one can speak of *two language* and *three language schools*. It would also seem in *three language schools* that two languages are given from Substandard A and the third language from Substandard B.

Except for the Administration for Whites, the Administration for Coloureds and the Rehoboth Government, where the mother tongue is the medium of instruction up to Standard 10, the schools of *the other education authorities* use the mother tongue as the *medium of instruction up to Standard 1 or 2*. English and Afrikaans are introduced as subjects in the first three years of school, and one of these two languages is the medium of instruction from Standard 2 or 3.

A noticable feature of this system is the *language overloading* of pupils, especially during the first three years of school (Substandard A, Substandard B and Standard 1) and ineffective introduction or exposure to English and Afrikaans in the first three years of school with a view to acquiring adequate language skill in these two languages as a future medium of instruction.

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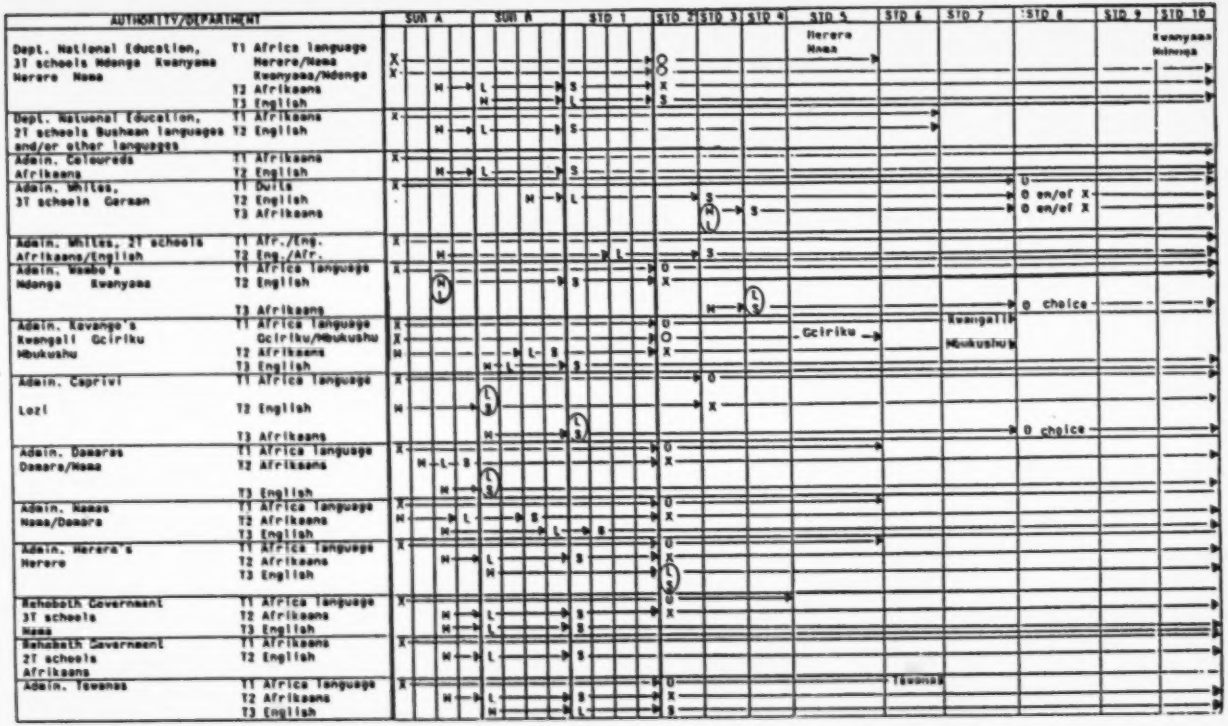
* Compare the following: Santiago, 1983: 127; Todd, 1983: 166; Odendaal, 1986: 78; Okonkwo, 1983: 375; Mikes, 1984: 121 en Reagan, 1985: 76).

TABLE 1.1
MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS (LANGUAGE INTRODUCTION PATTERN) ACCORDING TO THE PRESENT MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION POLICY OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION IN SWA/NAMIBIA



The central problem surrounding the medium of instruction at school, with which the education authorities of the indigenous population groups (in particular those with African mother tongues) have been struggling for some time, is which medium will best prepare pupils for postschool life. The problem is essentially the following: Should the mother tongue, or one of the official languages, be the medium of instruction?

A refinement of the central problem as stated, brings the following problems to the fore:

(i) If the mother tongue is to be the medium of instruction up to Standard 10, the following questions arise:

* Has the orthography of the African mother tongue been developed sufficiently for it to be used as the medium of instruction for all subjects up to Standard 10, and for all forms of tertiary education?

* Could a policy on teaching in the mother tongue - which would have to make provision for a variety of mother tongues (taking into account the developmental level of each and the furnishing of textbooks for all subjects as well as teacher training) - be afforded?

(ii) If the African mother tongue is to be the medium of instruction in the primary school - or just for the first three to four school years - the following questions arise:

* At what stage in the primary school should Afrikaans and/or English be introduced as subjects to enable the pupils to learn the languages?

* At what stage should oral and written work and reading instruction in the official languages be introduced to ensure effective acquisition of the languages?

* How should Afrikaans or English be introduced in the school programme as the future medium of instruction to prepare the pupils for the change-over to one of the official languages as the medium of instruction?

* At what stage should the change-over take place from the African mother tongue as the medium of instruction to Afrikaans or English as the medium of instruction?

* Should the African language still be taught as a subject after the change-over from the mother tongue to Afrikaans or English as the medium of instruction?

(iii) If the African mother tongue is not to be the medium of instruction, the following questions arise:

* Do the teachers have the required language proficiency to use the official language in question (Afrikaans or English) as the medium of instruction?

* What educational training strategies will need to be implemented to upgrade teachers' language proficiency?

1.3 AIM OF RESEARCH

Based on the research request in its entirety, the aims of the research are as follows:

(i) The first aim is to study the medium of instruction policy of various developing countries with reference to the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, the transition to a foreign language as the teaching medium, and the introduction of a foreign language as subject at school to determine how the different countries solved their teaching medium problems and if their solutions can be of any significance to SWA/Namibia.

(ii) The second aim is to investigate by means of longitudinal research models with experimental and control classes -

* the most effective medium of instruction for schools, and
* the most suitable stage at which and way in which English and/or Afrikaans should be introduced in primary schools.

(iii) The third aim[1] is to provide on the basis of research results guidelines for a medium of instruction policy for schools which will ensure -

* provision of equal education;
* the establishment of equal educational opportunities for inhabitants;
* optimal development of the inhabitants' human potential;
* providing for the country's manpower needs, and
* promoting economic growth.

1.4 OPERATIONALISING RESEARCH

On the basis of the Department of National Education's (SWA/Namibia) request, the project as a whole was considered and operationalised for research purposes. The following projects were identified and allocated to work committees:

(i) The medium of instruction in multilingual *developed countries* with reference to the policy and stage at which the other (foreign) language is introduced and the sequence in which the oral work, reading and written work of different languages, is introduced in schools in these countries.

(ii) The medium of instruction in *developing countries* (especially African countries) with reference to the policy and stage at which the other

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1) This goal will be dealt with in depth after the entire study has been completed.

(foreign) language is introduced and the sequence in which the oral work, reading and written work of different languages is introduced in schools in these countries.

(iii) The financial implications of providing textbooks, if the mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction up to Standard 10 and if English and Afrikaans are implemented as the medium of instruction up to Standard 10.

(iv) Financial implications of the training of teachers for language groups according to the present educational dispensation and if English and/or Afrikaans is/are implemented as the common medium of instruction.

(v) The present situation with regard to the medium of instruction in SWA/Namibia.

(vi) A medium of instruction policy for schools in SWA/Namibia. A longitudinal study to determine the desired medium of instruction.

The Institute for Educational Research is responsible for projects (ii) and (iv).

1.5 METHOD OF RESEARCH

A literature study (mainly with regard to developing African countries) was undertaken on the medium of instruction policy, the change-over from the mother tongue as the medium of instruction to a foreign language and the way in which a foreign language should be introduced as a school subject. A study was also made of research already undertaken, in an effort to throw some light on the aforementioned matters.

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS[1]

1.6.1 African languages

All languages in the country (except English and German), that is, the following recognised school and written languages: the Ovambo languages Ndonga and Kwanyama; the Kavango languages Kwangali, Gciriku and Mbukushu; Herero; Lozi (Caprivi); Tswana; Nama/Damara, as well as Afrikaans which is used as a school and written language by the coloured population, white Afrikaans-speaking persons and the inhabitants of Rehoboth. Bushman language is also a native tongue but is not recognised or developed for schooling purposes (cf. AGN Report 1982 : Preface).

1.6.2 First language

First language means a pupil's mother tongue or the language that is used as the medium of instruction for most or all school subjects.

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1) Clarification of concepts: The Department of National Education of SWA/Namibia supplied the definitions of languages and types of schools.

1.6.3 Second language

This means a language that is taken only as a subject and usually at the level of the second language syllabus. In the case of SWA/ Namibia, English or Afrikaans can be the second language where it is not the first language. In the school context, English or Afrikaans is a second language if the medium of instruction at school is an African language and applies up to Standard 10 level.

1.6.4 Mother tongue

There are different views on the meaning of this concept. The AGN Report (1982: Preface) defines it as "the language in which an infant learns to speak, or the language a child is most fluent in when he starts school" (translation). According to Unesco (1953: 47) the mother tongue is the language in which an individual first learns to formulate and express his ideas about himself and the world around him. "This language need not be the language he first learns to speak, since special circumstances may cause him to abandon this language more or less completely at an early age." At an Unesco meeting on the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction (Paris, 30 November-4 December 1981), the experts decided that a person's mother tongue can be defined as the language used by the ethnic community to which he or she belongs, provided that he or she has already mastered the language (Mikes 1984: 121). *For the purposes of this literature study, mother tongue is regarded as the language a child speaks or spoke in his parental home and knows best when he starts school.*

1.6.5 Foreign language

This concept means a language other than the mother tongue. (A foreign language can also be the second or third language.)

1.6.6 Language medium or the medium of instruction at school

This is the language in which most or all school subjects (except other languages) are taught, and obviously is also taught as a subject at the level of first language syllabus.

1.6.7 Two language schools

Schools in SWA/Namibia which teach English and Afrikaans as compulsory languages (subjects) (cf. AGN Report 1982: Preface).

1.6.8 Three language schools

Schools in SWA/Namibia which besides German or Ndonga, Kwanyama, Kwangali, Gciriku, Mbukushu, Herero, Lozi (Caprivi), Tswana, Nama and Damara as first language, also teach English and Afrikaans as compulsory languages (subjects) (cf. AGN Report 1982: Preface).

1.7 CONTENT OF THIS REPORT

In Chapter 2, entitled Views on the medium of instruction in multilingual countries, arguments in favour of the mother tongue as the

medium of instruction and arguments in favour of a foreign language as the medium of instruction are discussed and where necessary elucidated.

In Chapter 3, entitled Experiments conducted to determine the most suitable medium of instruction, the results of studies of the mother tongue and a foreign language as the medium of instruction are discussed.

Chapter 4, entitled The language medium policy of developing countries, deals with the influence of the colonial period on the language medium policy, as well as the language medium policy after independence and problems experienced in this regard.

Chapter 5, Options for a medium of instruction, discusses various options for language medium policy and how this choice is implemented. The advantages and disadvantages of the choice of a language medium are also examined.

Chapter 6, Factors influencing the choice of a language medium policy, deals with the criteria that can be used for choosing a medium of instruction, as well as the factors that influence the choice of a language medium.

Chapter 7, entitled Changing over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction deals with the method of changing over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction and the stage at which this should occur.

In Chapter 8, Introducing a foreign language (second language) as a subject at school, methods of introducing a foreign language as a subject at school and the stage at which this should take place, are discussed.

Chapter 9, Findings and recommendations supplies the main findings and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

VIEWS ON THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN MULTILINGUAL COUNTRIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

There are two schools of thought in education regarding the most suitable medium of instruction in the first three to four years of school (junior primary school phase) in multilingual countries. One group advocates use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, while the second is in favour of a foreign language - usually a universal language.

2.2 ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THE MOTHER TONGUE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

2.2.1 Psychological (psychopedagogic) arguments in favour of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction

* A child can only reach his full intellectual potential if he is educated through the medium of his mother tongue. Thinking systems are moulded and concepts are phrased in the mother tongue. Clarity of thought and conceptualisation depend on mental development in the mother tongue (Helm 1979: 25; cf. Nel 1986: 9).

* The language that a child uses daily, that is, his mother tongue, is more conducive to conceptualisation (formation of concepts) than another language whose phonetic and symbol systems are different and unfamiliar (Unesco 1981: 57).

* A pupil who is not taught through the medium of his mother tongue cannot acquire the deep insight of mother tongue speakers. Canham (1972: 37) explains this as follows when he says of the mother tongue: " ... it takes on powerful meanings beyond the meanings of the words we see on the surface."

* A pupil's insight and understanding are handicapped when a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction, and this leads to mechanical learning which is qualified as verbalism. This means that a pupil acquires words without grasping their meaning. Verbalism impairs the intellectual moulding of the child as well as creative thought (Duminy 1974: 462-463; RGN Report 1982: 23; Odendaal 1986: 74).

* A child learns the basic skills of his mother tongue in his preschool years. These skills are automatically used for understanding and self-expression (UNIN 1981: 57; Helm 1979: 38).

* The world is experienced and represented differently in various language communities. When a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction, not only must a pupil acquire a new language, but he also has to learn to see reality as another linguistic community perceives it and attributes significance to it (Gorman 1970: 26; Canham 1972: 17).

* When a child does not fully grasp the medium of instruction or has to concentrate hard to understand what the teacher is saying, his interest and attention will quickly diminish (RGN Report 1981a: 22).

* Pupils who are not taught in their mother tongue often have to think in one language and express themselves in another, with the result that they become psychologically uncertain and confused (Malefo 1986: 2).

* This long-winded process of conceptualisation not only causes a time problem with regard to the school time-table (much time is wasted on explanations and misunderstandings), but also emotional tension (affective lability) which handicaps the child's development and learning.

2.2.2 Educational arguments in favour of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction

* One of the prerequisites for successful teaching is good communication between pupil and teacher. Hence the medium of instruction (language medium at school) must help the pupil to understand the lesson presentation. Through the language medium, a child must be able to think about the lesson content, ask questions and supply answers. Thus the mother tongue is the most effective medium of instruction through which pupils can be meaningfully educated (Helm 1979: 26-27).

* A child learns more quickly through the medium of his mother tongue than through a foreign linguistic medium (Unesco 1953: 11). According to an extensive study undertaken in developing countries, a large percentage of pupils fail because of the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction at school (Helm 1979: 40).

* A foreign language as the medium of instruction places a double burden on pupils. Not only are they expected to attribute significance to ideas and concepts (hence master them), but also to learn a foreign language so that they can use it to communicate in the classroom situation (Helm 1979: 49-50).

* In some countries more than 50 % of pupils' time at school is spent on acquiring a foreign medium of instruction. Such a system wastes both pupils and teachers' time and is merely a financial burden to the community. The teaching of other subjects also suffers in the process (Helm 1979: 50).

* Since the vast majority of pupils in developing societies only study to the end of primary school and will not use the other languages, the mother tongue is the most suitable and practicable language for the masses. The period of time during which pupils are exposed to education is too brief to master a foreign tongue, and since mother tongue instruction is usually overlooked, pupils are generally sent out into the postschool world (business world, society) with a limited knowledge of both languages (the mother tongue and foreign language) (Unesco 1981: 57).

* The sociological perspective of greater co-operation between the home (family), school and community is today also found in education policies. If the mother tongue is the medium of instruction, this co-operation can be established with careful planning. If a foreign language is the medium of instruction, such co-operation will be difficult to establish (Nel 1986: 8).

2.2.3 Arguments concerning the emotional development of the child which stress the necessity of using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction

Use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction may have temporary or permanent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. The following reasons can be advanced for this statement:

* A child who is at an age where his power of expression in his mother tongue is not fully developed, is forced to express himself in a language that he has not yet mastered. Hence he might never develop the ability to properly express his thoughts and ideas (Helm 1979: 43; cf. Nel 1986: 8).

* A child who is taught through the medium of his mother tongue has the confidence to express himself and is not afraid to ask and answer questions (Duminy 1974: 462; Helm 1979: 43).

* A child who is forced to communicate in the school situation in a language that he cannot control, may experience insecurity, be unsure of himself, be scared to take chances and have difficulty to communicate with confidence (Krüger 1977: 87).

* There is a noticeable difference between the educative teaching situation at home and that at school. When a child starts school he has to make numerous emotional and social adjustments with regard to changing over from his parental home to the school situation. A change of language medium will only aggravate this adjustment problem, as illustrated in the following quotation: "To add a complete change of language for what is the central part of each day, may, to some children, mean school becomes a traumatic experience, rather than the place of delight in discovery and creativity that it should be" (Fawcett 1970: 57; cf. Unesco 1953: 49 and Duminy 1974: 46).

* Pupils who are taught through the medium of a foreign language (that is, a language other than their mother tongue) do not perform academically as well as they are intellectually capable of. Hence they tend to lose interest, develop an inferiority complex and might even start fearing the school situation (Helm 1979: 48).

2.2.4 Sociocultural and political arguments in favour of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction

* The child's mother tongue is the best medium of communication, because through the mother tongue he identifies with other members of the community (Unesco 1953: 11). Parents who are in favour of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, argue that it improves the communication between parents and children, as well as the childrens' identification with the culture and religion of their parents (Khan 1983: 124).

* Education through the medium of a foreign language can lead to cultural contamination, where the two cultures (that of the mother tongue and that of the foreign language) become intertwined to form a cross-culture which represents neither the one nor the other, or even to cultural disorientation where a child becomes totally estranged from his culture (Holm 1979: 53).

* It is incumbent on the school to carry over culture and it can only succeed in its task if the mother tongue is used as the language medium at school (Holm 1979: 55).

* The use of a foreign tongue as the medium of instruction not only impedes the general transmission of culture, but also estranges the child and his family, and the child and members of his language community. "This (the foreign language as the medium of instruction) may produce psychological blocks in the child in relation to his social environment and the values of his culture, and may give rise to difficulties in his relation with the older generation" (Unesco 1976: 17-18).

* Education in the mother tongue ensures the practice of human rights in general and the protection of national minorities in particular (Mikes 1984: 121).

* Developing communities support the mother tongue as the medium of instruction as a safeguard against Western cultural and linguistic imperialism (Reagan 1985: 75).

2.2.5 Linguistic arguments in favour of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction

* The introduction of a foreign language as the medium of instruction in the junior primary school phase disturbs the normal, extremely important process of mother tongue acquisition. Pupils develop a relatively limited vocabulary in their mother tongue, and as a result, are often compelled to borrow words from the limited vocabulary of the foreign language in order to express themselves properly. Use of a foreign language can also cause blunting of the child's linguistic feelings for his mother tongue, as well as serious problems in articulating this language (Holm 1979: 61).

* Mother tongue instruction enables pupils to communicate with adults inside and outside school and in so doing to inculcate use of the mother tongue (UNIN 1981: 57).

* A mother tongue speaker unknowingly has a knowledge of his language's deep grammar (phonology, morphology and syntax). When a six-year-old starts school, he already has an unconscious knowledge of the aforementioned language systems of his mother tongue and the teacher's task is merely to round off the use of these systems. A pupil who is confronted with a foreign language as the medium of instruction has no knowledge of the deep grammar of the foreign language medium and must learn everything from scratch (Okonkwo 1983: 375).

* Pupils who are taught through the medium of a foreign language live in two "linguistic spheres". Prior to starting school, they build up a considerable active and passive vocabulary in their mother tongue. At school they are taught through the medium of a foreign language and must acquire this language as a means of communication in the school situation. Hans (1971: 41) explains the problem inherent in this situation as follows: "Their minds become split into two water-tight compartments - one for ordinary things and actions expressed in their mother tongue, and another for things connected with school subjects and the world of ideas expressed in a foreign language. As a result they are unable to speak of their home affairs in the school language and about learned subjects in their mother tongue."

* The following argument is used to counter the opinion that a specific mother tongue is too underdeveloped to express modern ideas properly: "No language is inherently incapable of the development necessary to make it a satisfactory medium of instruction" (AGN Report 1982: 15).

* Many mother tongues of developing countries do not have the necessary orthographic or technological terminology. However, these languages could be developed to be used as media of instruction (Santiago 1983: 127).

2.3 ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS A COMMON MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

2.3.1 Educational arguments in favour of a common medium of instruction

* A shortage of trained teachers and a lack of educational material in the mother tongue make instruction through the medium of the mother tongue impractical (Todd 1983: 166).

* A child learns his mother tongue at home and by the time he starts school can use it properly. Hence it is unnecessary for schools to spend further time on it (Helm 1979: 65).

* If pupils are exposed to a foreign language as the medium of instruction from the time they start school, they are not exposed to the psychological shock of a change of medium at a later stage (Szepe 1986: 64).

* A medium of instruction policy for education which implies one common language, a foreign language for all language groups in a country, will greatly simplify language planning (UNIN 1981: 57).

* A common language as the medium of instruction makes it possible to train and employ teachers on a national basis (UNIN 1981: 57; Gorman 1970: 68).

* If the foreign language which is used as the medium of instruction is a universal language, it has a high status and there are numerous methods and aids for teaching it. Different countries can work together and exchange sources, teachers and experience (Taivo 1976: 406; Moumouni 1968: 288; Council of Europe 1983: 12).

* The mother tongue lacks literature in general and academic and teaching material in particular (Duminy 1974: 464).

* Use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction does not solve the problem of mixed mother tongue classes (Gorman 1970: 68).

2.3.2 Economic arguments in favour of a common medium of instruction

* The mother tongue of a developing community has little or no commercial value and hardly any status. It is regarded as a waste of time to teach in the mother tongue and use it as the medium of instruction (Helm 1979: 67; Duminy 1974: 464).

* Provision of textbooks in a common language will expedite the distribution of learning material and make the whole process more economical (UNIN 1981: 58). This will solve the problem of translation and printing costs in the different languages as well as the costs involved in developing a language's orthography (cf. Todd 1983: 166).

* Provision of education for a system of education in which a common language is the medium of instruction, will be far cheaper as far as the provision of education on a regional basis is concerned (UNIN 1981: 58). Provision of education at tertiary level (colleges and universities) which is a fairly expensive kind of education, should especially be kept in mind.

2.3.3 Sociocultural and political arguments in favour of a common medium of instruction

* It is impossible, from a practical point of view, to implement the principle of mother tongue education in a multilingual country, because it is difficult to provide education in the mother tongue for all language groups, especially if the groups are quite small (Helm 1979: 65; Bamgbose 1976: 12).

* Many developing countries regard the mother tongue as the bond with a past of isolation from the great cultural streams (Helm 1979: 69; Duminy 1974: 464).

* One language that can serve as a common medium of communication will foster co-operation between groups and hence national unity. Since European languages are foreign and therefore neutral, their use as a medium of instruction is recommended (UNIN 1981: 58; Helm 1979: 69).

* If the common language is an international language, it will make communication across geographical boundaries possible (UNIN 1981: 58; Bamgbose 1976: 12; Duminy 1974: 464; Reagan 1985: 74).

* Instruction through the medium of the mother tongue brings about racial segregation in schools (Reagan 1985: 76).

2.3.4 Linguistic arguments in favour of a common medium of instruction

The mother tongue does not have the scientific and technical terminology and vocabulary required by modern society. Meerkotter (1985: 92) states the following argument: "It is evident that the mother

tongue is very important in educating very young pre-school children, but as the years go by an international vehicle for scientific discussion becomes vital for the maturing pupil" (cf. Mawasha 1986: 5; Duminy 1974: 464; Nel 1986: 2).

2.4 CONCLUSION

Persons who advocate the mother tongue as the medium of instruction for the first three to four years, reason as follows:

(i) The mother tongue as the medium of instruction is a familiar and communicable language through which the child, as mother tongue speaker, can learn because

* he has a feeling for his language's deep grammar (phonology, morphology and syntax);
* he possesses an active and passive vocabulary;
* through the medium of his mother tongue he can acquire skills and knowledge easily, quickly and with insight;
* through his mother tongue he can develop to the full his conceptualisation, significance attribution, intellectual moulding, creativity and mental systems, and
* he can adapt more easily to the change from his parental home to the school situation without his experience of the new education and educative system being impeded.

(ii) Mother tongue as medium of instruction enables the school to promote cultural transfer and ties, mother tongue acquisition and purity.

Persons who propound a foreign language as the medium of instruction, reason as follows:

(i) Because of the shortage of trained teachers to teach through the medium of the mother tongue and the lack of educational material, literature and academic works in the mother tongue, it is essential to introduce a foreign language as the medium of instruction. Hence all teachers can be trained in one common language and the problem of a shortage of teachers can be overcome. Educational material (textbooks, academic works and literature) can only be provided in one language - a language which has the modern terminology. This will considerably curtail costs in respect of translation and printing and developing the orthographies of the mother tongues.

(ii) An international language as the medium of instruction will foster co-operation between language groups across geographical boundaries.

If one studies the arguments in favour of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction and a foreign language as the medium of instruction, the following aspects are evident:

(i) Mother tongue supporters continually stress the child's intellectual development - especially during the first three to four years of his schooling. Retaining his culture, ingraining his mother tongue and emotional development are also emphasised. The child's progress at school is the main consideration.

(ii) Advocates of a foreign language as the medium of instruction emphasise the considerable financial savings in respect of provision of education; elimination of the mother tongue and the national culture; facilitation of provision of education. The damage that a child might suffer in a foreign language educational situation appears to be overlooked - the child is regarded as less important in the educational situation.

One might well ask if decision makers intend putting the interests of the child first when formulating a medium of instruction policy.

(iii) A significant factor which proponents of a foreign language as the medium of instruction tend to forget is the stage in the child's school career at which a foreign language (as a subject and as a medium of instruction) reaches its optimum importance. Many of these arguments therefore apply to both secondary and tertiary education rather than initial education. Moreover, educationists do not always differentiate clearly between a language as the medium of instruction and a language as a subject.

CHAPTER 3

EXPERIMENTS CONDUCTED TO DETERMINE THE MOST SUITABLE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Since many arguments about the use of the mother tongue or a foreign language as the medium of instruction have not been substantiated empirically and are based purely on speculation, it is necessary to examine a few empirical studies dealing with the educational medium as a problem. The literature contains several experiments which show that the mother tongue is the most suitable medium of instruction. Experiments in favour of a foreign tongue deal with cases where there is a transition of the medium, that is, from the mother tongue to a foreign language. Only a brief description of one experiment was found which draws the conclusion that a foreign language is the most suitable medium of instruction.

3.1 EXPERIMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THE MOTHER TONGUE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

3.1.1 The Netherlands Antilles

Helm (1979: 86) refers to Prins-Winkel's report on an investigation conducted by the "Centrum Voor de Studie van het Onderwijs in Veranderde Maatschappijen" (CESO) on the Leeward Islands - Aruba, Bonaire and Curaco of the Netherlands Antilles, which deals with the use of a foreign language medium in education. The purpose of the study was to determine why such a large percentage of Antillean primary school children performed so poorly even though the schools were well-equipped and the teachers properly trained.

In 1968 (the time of the study) Dutch was the only language medium at school, although 80 % of the pupils hardly came into contact with Dutch extramurally. Antillean children who attended school generally had command of one language only - Papiamento - a native tongue.

The hypothesis put forward in the study was that pupils who are confronted at primary school level with a medium of instruction which does not function adequately as a language in their society, perform more poorly than pupils whose medium of instruction is their mother tongue and in whose environment the language does in fact function properly. To test this hypothesis, 3 103 Papiamento-speaking pupils (i.e. pupils whose mother tongue differed from the language medium at school) were compared with 338 Dutch-speaking pupils (i.e. pupils whose mother tongue did not differ from the language medium at school). The sample comprised pupils who in 1969 were in the first (1874 pupils), third (1 508 pupils) and sixth (1 026 pupils) standards at primary school. These two groups were compared in respect of school performance, social environment and intelligence.

The findings were as follows:

(i) On the whole Dutch-speaking primary school pupils who are taught in their mother tongue perform considerably better than Papiamento-speaking pupils (of the same age and in the same standard) who are taught in a foreign tongue (Dutch).

(ii) Papiamento-speaking primary school pupils repeat standards more often than their Dutch-speaking counterparts.

(iii) Dutch-speaking primary school pupils with high IQ's generally perform better than Papiamento-speaking primary school pupils with high IQ's.

(iv) Generally speaking, Papiamento-speaking primary school pupils perform more poorly than Dutch-speaking primary school pupils from the same social environment.

3.1.2 Ghana

(1) Carroll's study

In 1960 Carroll (1961: 54-63) subjected Ghanaian pupils from five primary schools to a series of language tests (word recognition, sentence construction, vocabulary and spelling, among others) to test their knowledge of their mother tongue and of English. The experiment showed that Ghanaian primary school pupils had a limited knowledge of English. The English and vernacular vocabulary of a group of children from one school was compared with that of another (see Table 3.1).

TABLE 3.1

A COMPARISON OF THE ENGLISH AND VERNACULAR VOCABULARY OF A GROUP OF GHANAIAN PUPILS

Age	Pupil	Class	English vocabulary	Vernacular vocabulary
12 yrs 8 mths	A	P6	1 600	5 000
10 yrs 3 mths	B	P5	1 600	6 200
9 yrs 0 mths	C	P4	1 100	5 700
8 yrs 5 mths	D	P3	700	4 700
7 yrs 3 mths	E	P2	800	5 300
6 yrs 3 mths	F	P1	300	3 100

Carroll (1961: 61) says the following about this comparison: "The results suggest that the English vocabulary of the children leaving the primary school at 12+ is rather smaller than their vernacular vocabulary on arrival at age 6+ and also lower than the vocabulary of English children leaving an infant school." According to Carroll, for these pupils English is an ineffective medium of instruction. Their vernacular vocabulary was such, however, that the mother tongue could be used as the medium of instruction.

Carroll extended this study to secondary school pupils and students at training colleges and drew the following conclusion: "It was also discovered that secondary school and training college students, educated under the most favourable circumstances, with native English-speaking teachers, seemed to be also far below the levels of comparable English groups. Two surveys of teachers' opinions confirmed

many of the conclusions experimentally derived and the indications are that African pupils could not show their true intellectual worth in English alone" (Carroll 1961: 61).

(2) The 1974 science study in Ghana

In 1974 a study was conducted in Ghana in which pupils were divided into two groups. Two science lessons were given to the one group in English and to the other group in their mother tongue. It was found that pupils between the ages of 12 and 14 were able to take larger deductive leaps and could point out more similarities when they were taught in their mother tongue as opposed to English, even though they had already been taught in English for six years. The following conclusion was drawn: "When the language is foreign, the children may mime adult concepts without any appreciable contribution towards their own conceptual growth. If they cannot express ideas or discuss them with their peers, conceptual growth may be stunted or impaired" (UNIN 1981: 61).

3.1.3 Republic of Ireland

According to Helm (1979: 112) pupils in the Republic of Ireland have been taught through the medium of Irish (the national language) for more than fifty years, although a very small percentage of the population have a command of the language. Macnamara conducted this experiment for two reasons:

(i) To determine the effect on the mathematical achievement of English-speaking pupils who are taught through the medium of Irish.

(ii) To ascertain the effect of the total programme for the revival of Irish in national schools on pupils' performance in English.

The first aim was achieved by teaching Arithmetic to a group of Irish pupils through medium of Irish, and to another group through medium of English, and to compare the two groups competence in Arithmetic, Irish and English. The second aim was realised by comparing the skill of Irish pupils in the English language with that of English-speaking pupils in Great Britain.

In his experiment, Macnamara subjected 1 085 primary school pupils from 199 schools to Arithmetic and language tests. He found that pupils (whose home language is English) who are taught Arithmetic in Irish, do not perform very well in the subject. The fact that these pupils were taught Arithmetic through the medium of Irish, however, did not adversely affect their progress in Irish or in English as subjects. The teaching of Arithmetic through the medium of Irish did not benefit their progress in this language.

A further finding was that English-speaking Irish pupils who spent 42 % of their time at school learning Irish did not achieve the same standard in written English as pupils in Great Britain. They also failed to achieve the same standard in written Irish as Irish-speaking pupils.

In an earlier study of Macnamara in the Republic of Ireland, he found that when English-speaking pupils were taught Mathematics through the medium of Irish as second language, this impeded their progress in Mathematics and their knowledge of Irish as a foreign language. "The indications are that native English-speakers not only know far fewer Irish than English words, but that the Irish words they know, do not come to them as readily as English words. There are good grounds for believing that such children who have been taught in Irish 'think in Irish' when they are set problems in that language; but that even when they understand Irish, they think less efficiently in Irish than in English. These indications imply not only that native English speakers have greater difficulty in solving Irish problems than English ones, but also that it is more difficult for them to discuss Irish problems than English ones with their teachers. Their weakness in Irish would lessen the help they would obain from their teachers" (Macnamara 1966:137).

3.1.4 Kenya

It was decided in Kenya in 1965 that English should be the medium of instruction from the first year of primary school. Because of concern about the possible detrimental effect of use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction on pupils in the educational situation, a study was conducted in 1967. Eight experimental classes, in which a modern primary school curriculum was offered in the child's mother tongue were involved. "It was found that because the children and teacher could communicate freely and spontaneously, the class atmosphere was inquiring, expressive, lively and full of interaction, a situation which even the best English medium class could not create" (UNIN 1981: 60).

3.1.5 Zambia

When Zambia became independent in 1966, the Zambian government introduced English as the language medium from the first year of school. In 1975 Sharma and Higgs published a report, Impact of English Medium in Children's Learning, containing a number of research studies on the success of the language medium policy. The report reads as follows: "We know of no research which establishes that children learn better through the medium of a second language than through their mother tongue, ... findings ... indicate that academic achievement is lower among children who have learned through a language which is not their mother tongue" (UNIN 1981: 61).

The report also refers to a study entitled The Reading Skills of Grade III Children, which was undertaken in 1973. The conclusion drawn is that only 18 out of every 100 pupils could master the Grade I English vocabulary of the integrated primary school course. Only seven out of 100 pupils could read the words at Grade 2 and 3 level. Sharma and Higgs (quoted by UNIN 1981: 61) also include in their report Numeracy at the Grade III level, in which the poor learning achievement of pupils is ascribed to the use of English as the medium of instruction. Pupils are expected to grasp Mathematical concepts explained to them in English - only six weeks after having been introduced to English as a foreign language and as the medium of instruction. The study found that non-English medium pupils who

were not taught through the medium of English, achieved better in Grade 4 Arithmetic than pupils who were taught through the medium of English. According to these studies, English as the medium of instruction at primary school level had dubious results (UNIN 1981: 61).

3.1.6 Nigeria

The Rivers Readers Project

This project was launched in 1970 with a view to providing readers and subject matter in approximately 20 languages/dialects of the state of Rivers, so that children could start learning to read in their own language before changing to English at a later stage. "The project is significant because it demonstrates production techniques and methods of material writing for producing low cost, mimeographed readers and course books written in a large number of mother tongues thus calling into question the often voiced view that it is too costly and difficult to provide reading materials in the mother tongue of every child" (Grenfell 1979: 70).

3.2 EXPERIMENTS IN FAVOUR OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Uganda: Iganga experiment

Two Ugandian Geography classes were used in this experiment. One class was taught through the medium of English and the other in their mother tongue. The English medium group performed better than the mother tongue medium group (Bamgbose 1976: 12).

3.3 CONCLUSION

Experiments conducted to determine the most suitable medium of instruction in primary school showed that the mother tongue is the best. The following findings came to light:

(1) Netherlands Antilles

Dutch-speaking pupils whose mother tongue and the medium of instruction were Dutch, performed generally better than the Papiamento-speaking pupils (mother tongue speakers) taught through the medium of Dutch (a foreign language).

(2) Ghana

Carroll's research showed that Ghanaian primary school pupils had an inadequate English vocabulary and that the mother tongue is the desired medium of instruction. Carroll also found that secondary school pupils and college students who were taught in the most favourable circumstances through the medium of English could not show their true intellectual worth through the medium of English.

(3) Republic of Ireland

Macnamara found that English-speaking pupils (mother tongue speakers) performed worse when taught through the medium of Irish (foreign language).

(4) Kenya

In Kenya, where the government decided to introduce English (foreign language) as the language medium from the first year of school, the finding was that mother tongue instruction was conducive to education because communication and pupil participation was far better than in English medium classes.

(5) Zambia

Research undertaken by Sharma and Higgs showed that pupils achieved better academically when taught through the medium of their mother tongue than when taught in English (foreign language). The mother tongue as the language medium in primary school seems to be the most advantageous for the child.

(6) Uganda

In Uganda it was found that pupils who were taught Geography through the medium of English (foreign language) performed better than pupils who were taught Geography in their mother tongue. Bear in mind that only one class was taught in the foreign language and only one in the mother tongue and that only one subject - Geography - was involved in the study.

Hence one may conclude that the mother tongue is the most suitable medium of instruction in primary school.

CHAPTER 4

THE LANGUAGE MEDIUM POLICY OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Today Africa has approximately 50 independent black states, the majority of which gained independence in the last two decades. Because SWA/Namibia is part of Africa and is on the brink of becoming independent, a study of various language medium policies and practices can play a crucial role in determining a language medium policy for the country.

When examining trends in the language medium policy of developing countries, Helm (1979: 127) maintains that one should differentiate between two periods, namely that prior to and that after independence. During the colonial era, the colonial powers largely determined the language medium policy, and after independence the state (country) itself was responsible for determining the language policy. The language medium policy in the period prior to and after independence (colonial era) will now be discussed*.

4.2 THE COLONIAL ERA

During the second half of the 19th century, virtually the whole of Africa was partitioned between the great European powers - Britain, France, Germany, Portugal and Belgium. In the majority of colonies the colonial governments did not pay much attention to formal education in the early days, for this was the responsibility of European missionaries. The latter used the indigenous languages as the medium of instruction to spread the Christian faith as effectively and quickly as possible among the black tribes. The colonial governments, however, swiftly intervened with their own policies and profoundly influenced trends.

4.2.1 French sphere of influence

France wanted to assimilate the nations in its colonial areas (*inter alia*, Dahomey, Ivory Coast, the Cameroons, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo) into a political and cultural unit. Hence with this goal in mind, where the French were in control, education was modelled on the same lines as education in France. French was taught as a subject, and all education was presented through the medium of French. It was only in 1951 that France began investigating the possibility of using indigenous languages as the medium of instruction in the colonies.

4.2.2 Portuguese sphere of influence

The aim of Portugal's colonial policy was to impress the Portuguese way of life on the inhabitants of their African colonies (Mozambique

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* Paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 (with subparagraphs) are based on the doctoral thesis of C.A.G. Helm (1979: 127-140).

and Angola). Portuguese was the official medium of instruction in the schools of the colonies. Hence until the Portuguese colonies attained independence in the sixties, indigenous languages virtually played no role at all in education.

4.2.3 German sphere of influence

In the German colonies (the Cameroons and present-day Tanzania) indigenous languages were used as the educational media in the lower classes in primary school, after which German was introduced.

4.2.4 Belgian sphere of influence

In the former Congo (present-day Zaïre) Belgium permitted and even encouraged mother tongue education in primary school.

4.2.5 British sphere of influence

In the 19th century in particular, Britain followed a policy of "laissez-faire" in her colonies. The aim of Britain, with regard to her African colonies (Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi, Swaziland, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe) was to adapt education to the intellectual capacity, aptitude and traditions of the different black peoples. It was only in the 20th century that Britain introduced an official language medium policy in her African colonies. This policy changed from time to time and was never forced on the colonies.

In a memorandum Language in African School Education published by the British, it was recommended that English be introduced as a subject during the fourth year of school (after pupils could read and write fairly well in the mother tongue). A further recommendation was that during the sixth year, English be used as the medium of instruction for certain subjects, so that in the tenth year all subjects could be taught through the medium of English. The gradual introduction of English as language medium was emphasised. This recommendation found expression in different ways in the policies of the British colonies.

In the fifties, it was common practice in British colonies to change to English as the medium of instruction as early as the third or fourth year of school. This change-over was rapid in most of the colonies. In urban areas, where each school had to cater for different language groups, a foreign language medium (English) was often introduced earlier, sometimes even in the first year of school.

After World War II, however, there was a noticeable shift of emphasis in certain colonies, especially those within the British sphere of influence. The mother tongue was used increasingly as the medium of instruction in primary school. This was mainly due to the rapid expansion of primary education in Africa after the war and the publication of two Unesco reports in 1953 in which mother tongue education for pupils was stressed.

4.3 THE PERIOD AFTER INDEPENDENCE

4.3.1 Policies on the language medium at school prior to 1970

When black states in Africa attained independence during the late fifties and sixties, efforts to establish viable mother tongue educational programmes experienced a setback. Most black states retained the education systems which they had inherited from the colonial powers and chose to use an international language as the medium of instruction at school level. This language was to be used as the medium of instruction as early as possible, preferably when pupils started school.

The tendency among black African countries (after independence) to move away from a language medium policy in which the mother tongue played a crucial role, was especially noticeable in the policies pursued in Ghana, Zambia, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and Malawi after independence in the sixties. This tendency, however, was not prevalent in all the black states. Some of the states, namely Somalia and Tanzania, after attaining independence, made purposeful efforts to gain recognition of the indigenous languages as official language media.

In the sixties, several of the conferences held in black African countries came out strongly in favour of preserving the cultural heritage of black nations, especially indigenous languages.

4.3.2 Policies after 1970

Since 1970, interest in the mother tongue as a subject and as the language medium at school has escalated dramatically in African countries. At various conferences and seminars, voices were raised in favour of retaining indigenous languages and use thereof as the medium of instruction at school. Thus, for example, at a seminar in Nairobi in 1974 with the theme, Basic Education in Eastern Africa, the following conclusion was drawn: "The progress made in the last decade towards the use of indigenous languages in the school system throughout the region must rank as a major achievement to which substantial and increasing benefits will accrue in the coming years. And it would appear from the efforts made that the consensus opinion is that where it is at all possible, the language of basic education should be the national language" (quoted by Helm 1979: 143). Some African countries - Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Mali, Guinea, Somalia, Tanzania, Swaziland, Zaïre and Senegal established institutions to develop indigenous languages so that they could be used as educational media.

4.4 PRESENT LANGUAGE MEDIUM POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN DEVELOPING AFRICAN COUNTRIES

As far as language medium policies are concerned, the developing countries of Africa can be divided into three categories, namely those which use a foreign language consistently at primary and secondary school level; those which use a mother tongue throughout education, and those which employ both a mother tongue and foreign language. Table 4.1 illustrates the language medium policies of developing countries.

TABLE 4.1

LANGUAGE MEDIUM SITUATION IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF AFRICA: 1979-1983 (Helm 1979: 155; Cameron and Hurst 1983: 1-896; UNIN 1981: 77-85; RGN Report 1981c: 43; Mbamba 1982: 163)

Countries that consistently use a foreign language as the medium of instruction	Countries that consistently use a mother tongue as the medium of instruction	Countries with a mother tongue and a foreign language as the medium of instruction	
		Countries that change from a mother tongue to a foreign language as the medium of instruction	School year in which the foreign language is introduced as the medium of instruction
Zambia	Sudan	Botswana	3, 4
Sierra Leone		Ghana	4, 5, 6
Senegal		Lesotho	4, 5
Niger		Malawi	4, 5, 6, 7
Kenia		Nigeria	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Cameroon		Swaziland	4, 5, 6
Ivory Coast		Uganda	5, 6, 7
Dahomey		Ethiopia	Start of secondary school phase
		Somalia	
		Tanzania	
		Algeria	3

The school years in which the foreign language is introduced as the medium of instruction span the period 1979 to 1983. Note that although this table reflects the official policy of the language medium situation in developing African countries, the actual application of the official policy manifests deviations. Thus, for example, Kenya's official language medium policy is that English is used as the medium of instruction from the first school year, while most schools in Kenya start with the mother tongue as the language medium and in the second and third year change to English (Helm 1979: 146). Sources also differ with regard to the school year in which the foreign language is introduced as the language medium.

One can deduce, however, that a foreign language is introduced as the language medium in the higher primary and initial secondary school phase.

4.5 LANGUAGE MEDIUM POLICY IN CERTAIN DEVELOPING AFRICAN COUNTRIES

4.5.1 Language medium policy in Zambia (Cameron & Hurst 1983: 459-516; UNIN 1981: 77-78; Baker 1983: 225-228)

(1) The language situation

The eleven main language groups speak 70 different languages and dialects, of which the languages of the seven largest ethnic groups namely, Bemba, Tonga, Nyanja, Lozi, Kaonde, Lunda and Luvale, are accepted as official languages and taught as school subjects. Bemba, Tonga, Nyanja and Lozi are regarded as the most important because these four languages are the mother tongues of 35 %, 16 %, 11 % and 8 % of the population respectively. The percentages of the population that speak the other three main languages are 2,9 %, 2,6 % and 2,4 %. English is also an official language in Zambia and was introduced by the government as the language medium in 1965. English is a very prominent language in Zambia. This is proved by the fact that two national newspapers are published in English and that 38 % of the radio transmissions are done in English.

(2) Problems experienced as a result of the language situation

* Communication problems are experienced because of the vast difference between the percentage of inhabitants speaking each language.

* The low status of local languages as against English means that inhabitants' cultural identity is threatened.

* Rapid modernisation of the economy creates problems because local languages lack the necessary vocabulary to name modern phenomena.

* Rapid urbanisation and migration within the country cause communication problems because different languages are used in different regions.

* Language diversity also creates problems in the political life of the country, government management and administration and commercial and industrial organisations. Thus, for example, the Bembas (largest group) are alleged to have more power and influence than their members justify. The Bembas, however, maintain that they are underrepresented compared with other smaller groups.

(3) Medium of instruction policy

(a) Primary school level

From 1965 onwards, English was introduced as the official medium of instruction in schools from Grade 1. All educational material, educational aids and books are in English, although teachers sometimes explain difficult concepts in one of the seven official Zambian languages. These seven languages are offered as subjects in

primary school according to the dominance of each language group within the area in which schools are situated. Hence for the purposes of primary school education, Zambia is divided into seven geographical regions. This ensures permanent literacy in one of the principal Zambian languages.

(b) Secondary school level

At junior secondary school level only the four main languages - Bemba, Tonga, Nyanja and Lozi are offered and examined as subjects. At senior secondary school level only Bemba and Nyanja are taught and examined as subjects. Hence the Zambian local languages, even the official languages, lose representation and status at school.

(4) Advantages and disadvantages of the language medium policy at school

(a) Advantages

Education through the medium of all the mother tongues would entail greater financial expenditure. A common language medium would curtail expenses.

(b) Disadvantages

* Although English is Zambia's official language medium, a large percentage of the population cannot speak it.

* Teaching aids have to be supplied at high costs in the seven local languages for use in primary school.

* The boundaries of the geographical language areas do not coincide with language usage boundaries. Thus, for example, Lusaka province is a Nyanja language area, but due to rapid urbanization and migration from other parts of the country, the majority of inhabitants have another mother tongue.

* In the Kaonde, Lunda and Luvale regions, the authorities have difficulty in finding teachers who can speak and write the languages.

* Overloading and mixing of languages is a further problem. Thus a child with Tonga as his mother tongue can move to a Bemba area with his parents where he is compelled to adopt Bemba as lingua franca. The result is a linguistically inferior "village Bemba". When a child, aged seven, starts primary school, he is taught in English and simultaneously learns a standard Bemba as a curriculum subject. Tonga, however, is still his home language. He is therefore compelled to use at least three different languages - Tonga at home, two forms of Bemba (one in the street and playground and one in the classroom) and English. It is on the strength of his ability to master English that he is admitted to secondary school.

* Tension arises in the home-school situation. A child is unable to communicate effectively in his home language, the subject matter that he learns at school. He also has difficulty communicating to his teachers what he has learned and discussed in his mother tongue.

* Pupils who leave school after Grade 4 or 7 have an inadequate linguistic skill to communicate effectively in the outside world.

* Language stratification arises. English is regarded as the language of the ruling class and the Zambian languages as those of the workers. Hence English is accorded a prestige role.

4.5.2 Language medium policy in Algeria (Cameron and Hurst, 1983: 573-602)

(1) The language situation

Because of the country's French colonial background, French has become entrenched in Algeria, and serves as the *lingua franca* among various ethnic groups. It is the language for general communication, the principal language in higher education and training, the business world, the government and administration, as well as for social interaction between the older generations. The government, however, pursues a policy of diversification away from French. Because English has the advantage of international trade and communication, it is given preference to French, although 90 % of the population speak Arabic and 81,5 % regard this language as their mother tongue. This language is Algerian Arabic and not modern literary Arabic. At present the government is trying to arabicise schools and universities to a greater extent by teaching literary Arabic at these educational institutions.

(2) Problems experienced as a result of the language situation

Although 90 % of the population can speak Arabic, the 1969 census showed that only about 16 % can read and write it. One can assume that there will be an insignificant rise in the percentage of educated people. (Statistics were not available.)

(3) Language medium policy

(a) Primary school level

In the first two years of primary school, the work is taught in modern literary Arabic. In the third year French is included in the curriculum. Subjects are taught in Arabic for about twenty hours a week and in French for about ten hours a week. From the fifth and sixth school years, pupils are divided into two groups. One group, which comprises two-thirds of pupils, are taught Arithmetic through the medium of French which gives them a total of 14 hours per week of teaching in French as against 16 hours in Arabic. The smaller group is taught Arithmetic in Arabic, which gives them 20 hours of teaching in this language as opposed to 10 hours in French.

(b) Secondary school level

In the first four years of the secondary school phase, French and Arabic as medium of instruction are further separated. Both languages are still taught as subjects - Arabic for about seven hours a week and French five hours a week. Arabic is the language medium for History, Geography, Mathematics and Physical Science in the so-called "classes arabisées". Mathematics and Physical Science pupils

in the "classes bilingues" (two-thirds of pupils study these subjects) are taught in French. English is offered for four hours a week from the third year of school. In the last three years of secondary school training, all pupils study History, Geography and Philosophy in Arabic. They also have three to eight hours a week of Arabic as a subject depending on what stream they are following. Three streams are distinguished: the Human Sciences stream (where all subjects are taught in Arabic), the Mathematics stream and the Science stream. In the two latter streams a third of the pupils are taught technical subjects in Arabic and two-thirds of them in French. French remains a separate subject and a maximum of five hours a week is devoted to teaching it. This puts the language on the same level as English which is taught throughout the last three years of secondary school training for two to five hours a week (depending on the stream).

(4) Advantages and disadvantages of the language medium policy

(a) Advantages

* English opens international doors for Algeria (cf. Paragraph 4.5.2(1)).

* Promotion of Arabic re-awakens Algeria's own culture, or in the words of President Boumediene: " ... the settlers imposed their language and vision of history upon us, and so to begin with we must re-awaken what is truly Algerian in our culture ..." (Cameron and Hurst 1983: 579).

(b) Disadvantages

The Arabic used at school as the medium of instruction is not the same Arabic that pupils speak at home, but modern literary Arabic. Hence communication problems are experienced.

4.5.3 Language medium policy in Tanzania (UNIN 1981: 81)

(1) The language situation

At present Tanzania has two official languages - English, which is a direct result of the colonial era, and Kiswahili, an indigenous language. Although the inhabitants prefer Kiswahili, they realise that English is still important for continuing education, research and international communication. If English was to be phased out, Tanzania would be isolated from the international community. Hence the country pursues a bipartite policy. Firstly, use of Kiswahili as a national/official language is encouraged and developed at all levels of administration. Thus it is used in parliament, at cabinet meetings and in official correspondence. Secondly, the government aims to raise the standard of English instruction to provide Tanzanians with an instrument for wider communication.

(2) Language medium policy

(a) Primary school level

Kiswahili is the language medium at primary school level.

(b) Secondary school level

English is the medium of instruction at secondary school level. Many people are strongly in favour of making Kiswahili the language medium at secondary school and university level, but English is recognised as the key to future education.

(3) Disadvantages of the language medium policy

The language medium policy does not cater for Kiswahili dialects. Inland Kiswahili differs from the Kiswahili spoken in the coastal areas (UNIN 1981: 81) and communication problems are therefore experienced.

4.3.4 Language medium policy in Malawi (Cameron and Hurst 1983: 207-249)

(1) The language situation

A variety of dialects are spoken in Malawi, of which the following are the most important: Tumbuka, Chichewa (Nyanja), which also serves as a *lingua franca* and is the country's second official language, Yao and Lomwe. English is the medium of higher primary, secondary and tertiary education and is also used in official government halls. Chichewa is a compulsory subject at all schools but other dialects are used for oral communication in the community.

(2) Language medium policy

(a) Primary school level

Whatever the mother tongue of pupils is, primary school education starts officially in Chichewa, but from Standard 1 onwards English is taught as a subject. In Standard 5, four other subjects are taught through the medium of English, while from Standard 6 to 8 all subjects are given in English.

(b) Secondary school level

English is the medium of instruction at secondary school level.

(3) Disadvantages of the language medium policy

* The country has to contend with a high failure rate in primary school. In 1974/75 only 51,5 % of pupils moved up from Standard 1 to 2. The percentage of passes gradually rises as the number of years at school increases, although the Standard 7/8 pass rate for the same year was only 72 %. The seriousness of the failure problem varies from one district to the next and may be ascribed *inter alia* to the language medium policy.

* Malawi has a shortage of teachers. A key subject such as English is often taught by foreign teachers. The government, however, plans to reduce the numbers of such teachers.

4.5.5 Language medium policy in Ethiopia (Cameron and Hurst 1983: 75-104)

(1) Die language situation

Ethiopia has about 50 different ethnic groups which speak just as many languages. Most of the languages have two or three distinguishing dialects. Amharic (a Semitic language) is the first official language and is still used as the medium of instruction. The government also encourages the use of other Ethiopian languages in the education system. Besides Amharíc the national radio service also uses Tigrinya, Oromnya and Somalinya. Of all the Ethiopian languages only Amharic, Tigrinya and Gallinya have a written form. English is the second official language and the medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education. English is also used by the government in administration. A large number of inhabitants also speak Italian. A fairly large group of people also have a knowledge of French.

(2) Problems experienced because of the language situation

* Only three of the more than fifty languages have a developed orthography.

* It is impossible to make provision for all the languages in the education system because of the expenses involved in providing education and teachers for the large number of languages.

* The language situation is such that it is a coincidence if an Ethiopian child receives his primary education in his mother tongue.

(3) Language medium policy

(a) Primary school level

The medium of instruction at primary school is Amharic, although English is taught as a subject from Grade 3 onwards. A document of the Ethiopian deputation to the conference of African ministers of Education in Lagos (1976) reads as follows: " ... it is now the intention of the government that other languages (than Amharic) should be used as the media of teaching in the primary grades" (Cameron and Hurst 1983: 87). It would appear from the literature that those resolutions have not come to fruition.

(b) Secondary school level

Theoretically, all education from Grade 7 onwards is in English. According to Helm (1979: 154) the government also intends to use as language medium the indigenous language, Amharic, at secondary school and tertiary levels of education.

(4) Advantages and disadvantages of the language medium policy

(a) Advantages

Promotion of Amharic by the education system results in a strengthening of national unity. (Note that an indigenous and not a foreign language is the common medium of instruction as in other African countries.)

(b) Disadvantages

Most Ethiopians must first acquire another language (Amharic in primary school and English in secondary school) as their home language before they can learn to read and write and be educated in secondary school.

4.5.6 Language medium policy in Sierra Leone (Cameron and Hurst 1983: 331-358)

(1) The language situation

English is the official language in Sierra Leone. Of the seventeen ethnic groups' languages there are three indigenous languages which are regarded as the most practicable for communication purposes, namely, Krio (a combination of English and a West African linguistic structure), Mende and Temne. Government policy is to promote indigenous languages.

(2) Problems experienced as a result of the language situation

Although English is the official language, according to the 1963 census, only 7,7 % of the total population of ten years and above were literate in English. (One can assume that the percentage of literate persons will still be low.)

(3) Language medium policy

(a) Primary school level

Theoretically, English is the medium of instruction, but in practice a pupil's mother tongue is often used to afford him the opportunity of expressing his thoughts and of developing his creativity and self-confidence.

(b) Secondary school level

At present English is still the medium of instruction at secondary school level but the government's policy of promoting indigenous languages does not exclude the possibility of Krio being used further than primary school level in the future.

(4) Advantages of the language medium policy

The government's policy of also promoting indigenous languages at school can help to bridge the gap between the traditional and indigenous, on the one hand, and the modern and Western, on the other.

4.5.7 Language medium policy in the Cameroons (Cameron and Hurst 1983: 43-73)

(1) The language situation

Because of its British and French colonial background, the Cameroons has two official languages - English and French. Not one of the ten indigenous languages, which can be divided into 285 dialects, has

official status. English and French can be used as language media at all levels of society, although the latter is the dominant language medium.

French and English are used as communication media in international trade. At home, however, the indigenous languages are firmly established.

(2) Problems experienced as a result of the language situation

* Because of its British and French colonial background, the Cameroons has been experiencing since independence a constant identity crisis which the government is trying to resolve by fusing two separate and distinctive former colonial regimes. It has already succeeded at political and economic level but has been less fortunate in the field of education. The Cameroons' education system comprises a large former French one and a smaller former British one. At the level of technical education there are definite signs of communality. Serious efforts are being made to make secondary school pupils competent in both official languages (French and English).

* Adults are opposed to the acquisition of new languages and language patterns. Hence language usage, like education itself, is generation bound.

(3) Language medium policy

(a) Primary school level

Within the English medium education system English is the medium of instruction. No indigenous language is taught as a subject. A number of schools introduce French in the fifth school year. The French medium education system uses French as the medium of instruction.

(b) Secondary school level

English is the language medium in English medium secondary schools, while French is used in French medium secondary schools. English, German and Spanish are taught as subjects in the French medium system.

(4) Disadvantages of the language medium policy

Education is usually regarded as an instrument for promoting national unity. In the Cameroons it is the education system that has a detrimental effect on unity because of language discord.

4.5.8 Language medium policy in Nigeria (Cameroon and Hurst 1983: 269-302; Ubahakwe 1980: 157-163)

(1) Language situation

Nigeria has a diversity of languages. In fact in a recent study 400 were identified. Of these, three main languages, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are spoken by about half of the population, although not neces-

sarily as mother tongue. National radio broadcasts are in the aforementioned three languages as well as in Efik, Edo, Kanuri, Tiv, Fula, Ijo and English. Arabic is very seldom used as a contact language. Although there is no official national language, all important announcements and documents are in English, which can therefore be regarded as the official language and lingua franca.

(2) Problems experienced because of the language situation

* Although English can be regarded as the official language and lingua franca, only about 15 % of the population can speak it and only a small percentage of the population is completely literate in standard English.

* A pidgin is used in multilingual areas especially in large towns and in the north.

(3) Language medium policy

(a) Primary school level

According to national policy, the mother tongue must be used in the first three years of primary school. Each state, however, adapts this policy to suit its own circumstances. Hence language medium practices differ from one state to the next. In unilingual states pupils change over to English as language medium in their fourth year, while multilingual states do not have an international language at all, or use English as the medium of instruction as early as the first or second school year (Holm 1979: 149).

(b) Secondary school level

English is the language medium in secondary schools.

(4) Advantages and disadvantages of the language medium policy

English can be regarded as a neutral language which could possibly contribute to the government's policy to reduce differences and tensions between the various ethnic groups (Cameron and Hurst 1983: 269-302).

4.6 CONCLUSION

4.6.1 Language medium policy in primary schools

(1) Position of the mother tongue and the foreign language as the medium of instruction

According to Table 4.1, nine countries have introduced a foreign language as the medium of instruction from the first year of school. Generally speaking, one can say that the transition from a foreign language as the medium of instruction occurs between the third and fifth school year. It would therefore appear that the mother tongue as language medium plays a vital role up to the second or fourth school year. Some countries (Zambia and Sierra Leone) use a foreign language as the medium of instruction (English) from the first

school year. Because of the English and French influence in the Cameroons there are English and French medium schools which use a foreign language as the medium of instruction from the first school year.

(2) Advantages and disadvantages of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in primary schools of countries which use the mother tongue as the language medium (regardless of the educational phase)

(a) Advantages of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in primary schools of countries that use the mother tongue as the medium of instruction (regardless of the educational phase)

* Use of the mother tongue as language medium ensures cultural preservation, and the mother tongue is retained as the medium of communication of a particular community. This in turn ensures that the community keeps its identity.

* Because the mother tongue is familiar to pupils, fewer fail in primary school.

* There is no shortage of teachers able to teach in the mother tongue. The shortage of teachers able to teach through the medium of a foreign language, as well as inadequate command of the foreign language, lowers the standard of education.

(b) Disadvantages of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in primary schools of countries that use the mother tongue as the medium of instruction (regardless of the educational phase)

* Provision of education for different language groups in a country to enable pupils to be taught in the mother tongue is costly.

* Urbanisation and migration to large towns makes it impossible to satisfy the educational needs of every language group.

* The orthography of only a few mother tongues has been developed in African countries. Hence the mother tongue cannot be used consistently as the medium of instruction.

(c) Advantages of a foreign language as the medium of instruction in the primary schools of countries that use a foreign language as the medium of instruction (regardless of the educational phase)

* The problem of local languages lacking the necessary technical vocabulary can be overcome by using a more developed foreign language (frequently a universal language).

* Use of a common foreign language as the medium of instruction in multilingual countries curtails expenses that would be incurred if pupils were to be taught through the medium of all the mother tongues.

* Because many languages in multilingual colonies lack a developed orthography, utilisation of a foreign language (one with an established orthography) as the medium of instruction is advantageous.

(d) **Disadvantages of a foreign language as the medium of instruction in primary schools of countries that use a foreign language as the medium of instruction (regardless of the educational phase)**

* Although the foreign language used as the medium of instruction in primary schools in multilingual countries is also often the official language, large percentages of the populations of these countries do not have a command of the foreign language. (In Nigeria only about 15 % of the population speaks English, while the 1963 census in Sierra Leone showed that only 7,7 % of the total population (ten years and older) were literate in English.)

* If a pupil is taught through the medium of a foreign language and is taught his mother tongue and possibly other local languages as subjects but still uses his mother tongue at home, language overloading and mixing might occur.

* Home-school tension arises when a pupil is exposed to a foreign language at school and his mother tongue at home.

* Countries that change over from a mother tongue language medium to a foreign language medium of instruction in primary school have to contend with a high failure rate. (In 1974/75, only 51,5 % of Malawian pupils were promoted from Standard 1 to Standard 2.)

* In multilingual countries where a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction from the first school year, pupils have to acquire a language other than their home language before they can learn to read and write.

4.6.2 **Language medium policy in secondary schools**

(1) **Position of the mother tongue and the foreign language as the medium of instruction**

* A foreign language is used as the medium of instruction in secondary schools. In some countries (Algeria, for example) groups of subjects are taught through the medium of the mother tongue (Arabic) and through the medium of a foreign language (French).

* The mother tongue/tongues of the largest groups of the population is/are offered as a subject/subjects.

* Certain countries (Sierra Leone and Tanzania) are considering introducing the mother tongue as the medium of instruction at secondary and even tertiary levels of education.

(2) **Advantages and disadvantages of the language medium policy in secondary schools**

(a) **Advantages**

* A foreign language (English or French) makes communication possible across political boundaries - especially in the field of economics.

* Use of a foreign language makes it possible for students in tertiary education to communicate with other people in other countries.

* Provision of education for only one common language medium is financially feasible.

* The fact that the mother tongue is taught as a subject is proof that culture and identity are still being retained.

(b) Disadvantages

* Confusion of tongues, language overloading and tension between the home and school occurs.

* Pupils who leave school before or during the secondary school phase are incapable of using a foreign language and their mother tongue effectively in the postschool world.

* Although the aim of introducing a foreign language as the medium of instruction was to promote national unity, in practice the results have been disappointing.

* The fact that teachers do not have a proper command of the foreign language and that there is a shortage of teachers able to teach in this language, has a negative effect on education at school.

4.6.3 Remark

It would appear then that the medium of instruction at school causes numerous problems in African countries and in one or other way is a disadvantage for both pupils and the community.

CHAPTER 5

OPTIONS FOR A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Every multilingual country is forced to make an important policy decision - namely, what language to use as the medium of instruction. Here the authorities must consider the role that a child's mother tongue and a foreign language are going to play in the language medium policy. Various authors distinguish different options for a language medium choice. Some of these options will now be discussed.

5.2 HOUIS' OPTIONS FOR A LANGUAGE MEDIUM AT SCHOOL

Houis' (1976: 393-405) exposition is based specifically on options within a bilingual education system but can also be applied to a multilingual situation. He maintains that a language has three pedagogic functions. The first function is to provide access to writing as a method of communication. (With the function "to provide access to writing as a method of communication" is meant the written usage of the language by all levels of the community. Oral usage and reading of the language precedes the teaching of the written language. These three aspects of language acquisition are presented in an integrated manner in the language programme.) The second is that of language as the medium of instruction. The third function is language as a subject. The different ways in which the two languages involved in a specific education system share the three functions, provide the various options for a language medium choice. Houis uses the following example to explain the various options: An African child has a mother tongue and is confronted at school with a foreign language. Say, for the sake of argument, that the mother tongue is an African language and the foreign language French. According to Houis there are eight ways in which a child's mother tongue and/or foreign language can be accommodated within a language medium policy. The different options are as follows:

(1) First option

The African language affords access to reading and writing, is taught as a subject and is the medium of all instruction. French is offered as a subject, but does not perform either of the other two functions. (This statement refers to the written usage of French as a subject and that French is not the common (general) written language. French does not give access to reading and writing at all levels of the community.) A prerequisite here is that the subject matter is prepared in the African language and is available in all subjects in which instruction is given. The same applies to teachers' training courses. This option creates a need for a press that uses the African language as medium, so that the reading and writing skills acquired can be used after school.

(2) Second option

The second option for a medium of instruction applies when there is a lack of study material for the entire school programme in the

African language, but a reasonable amount of reading matter. The African language is then used to teach pupils to read and write and is also offered as a subject. French is introduced as a subject at a later stage and thereafter serves as the medium of instruction for the whole curriculum.

(3) Third option

There is indeed study material in the African language, but only in certain subjects. These subjects are taught through the medium of the African language, while French is the language medium for the other subjects.

(4) Fourth option

As far as the fourth option for a medium of instruction is concerned, the African language is only included in the curriculum as a subject, and performs neither of the other two functions, namely that of a written language and medium of instruction. (French has the function of a written language at all levels of the community and is also the medium through which other subjects are taught.) Hence the only educational material required for the African language is enough reading matter. The danger of this option, however, is that when a child learns to spell words in the African language, he might project the spelling rules of written French on to those of the African language.

(5) Fifth option

Writing skill is acquired through the French spelling rules and French is also taught as a subject. The African language is introduced as a subject with a view to using it as the medium of instruction.

(6) Sixth option

French provides access to writing and reading skills, while both languages (French and the African language) are applied as the media of instruction. Some subjects are taught in the African language and others in French.

(7) Seventh option

All three pedagogic language functions are performed through the African language. According to Houis, in cases where this option is applied in primary school, the subsequent secondary school course usually includes a European language (in most cases English) as a subject or the medium of instruction.

(8) Eighth option

According to this option, French is the only subject used at school. African languages are outside the field of instruction.

According to Houis one can even combine these alternatives. Whatever one's choice, " ... it must be rooted in an analysis of the economic

Table 5.1 depicts the eight options for a language medium.

TABLE 5.1

HOUIS' EIGHT OPTIONS FOR A LANGUAGE MEDIUM (1976: 397-398)

Functions of language at school	Option 1		Option 2		Option 3		Option 4		Option 5		Option 6		Option 7		Option 8	
	*Mt A	Fl F	Mt A	Fl F	Mt A	Fl F	Mt A	Fl F	Mt A	Fl F	Mt A	Fl F	Mt A	Fl F	Mt A	Fl F
Language that provides access to writing as a medium of communication	X		X		X			X		X		X	X			X
Language as subject	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Language as the medium of instruction	X			X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X			X

* - Mt-mother tongue Fl-foreign language A-African language F-French

and socio-linguistic circumstances of the particular state concerned" (Houis 1976: 399).

5.3 ZIRKEL'S EVALUATION OF A CHOICE OF A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Cummins (1978: 398-401) refers in his research to language medium choices evaluated by Zirkel to pinpoint the effect of language medium policies on bilingual children. Zirkel conducted a comparative study of bilingual children's skill in their first language (mother tongue) and their second language, to determine the effect of different language medium policies on the children's command of language.

(1) Total immersion

The aim of this programme is to make children fully bilingual without impeding their first language. The goal seems to have been largely realised although the children's first language remained somewhat dominant. (Total immersion means that pupils are taught all their subjects for the first two or three school years through a language that is not their mother tongue. Thereafter the mother tongue is introduced as the medium of instruction for some of the subjects, until the stage is reached that half of the subjects are taught through the mother tongue and the other half through the second language (Nijsse 1980: 23).)

(2) Submersion

The objective of submersion is to promote the second language skill of migrant children or children belonging to minority language groups. In this programme the curriculum fails to provide for the language (mother tongue) or the culture of the minority group and is attuned to fostering assimilation by encouraging or forbidding use of the children's first language (mother tongue). Since the child's mother tongue is often regarded as the handicap in acquiring the school language, a decrease in the child's need and ability to speak his first language is regarded as desirable. Zirkel (Cummins 1978: 398-401) found that submersion widens the gap between home and school and leads to a high failure rate among children belonging to minority groups.

(3) Transitional bilingual programme

With a view to combatting the high failure rate among children belonging to minority language groups, educationists in America and elsewhere introduced different types of bilingual teaching programmes, one of which was called a transitional programme. Here, the child's first language (mother tongue) is used in the first few years of school as a transition or bridge to second language instruction. The aim of the transitional programme, however, is the same as that of the submersion programme. The child's first language is used initially only to enable him to master the curriculum contents, while he acquires the second language. The first language is not regarded as functional in the child's academic or cognitive development and no effort is made to promote or maintain his skill in this language. The form of bilingualism that is developed by this pro-

gramme is known as "subtractive bilingualism" (Kessler and Quin 1982: 55). According to Cummins (1978: 400) it is too early to accurately evaluate the programme. Educationists, however, are not very positive about the programme, and initial research has shown that the value of the transitional programme has definite limitations.

It would appear, however, that pupils involved in the transitional programmes fared somewhat better in respect of acquiring language skills than those involved in the submersion programmes, because limited recognition of minority cultures and languages is preferable to no recognition at all. Remember however, that this statement should be regarded as a hypothesis and not as a confirmed research result.

(4) Maintenance bilingual programme

According to this programme, the pupils' mother tongue and the foreign language are used as language medium on a fifty-fifty basis. The maintenance bilingual programme was introduced in certain rural areas of Alberta (Canada) for minority group pupils. The aim of this maintenance programme, like that of the submersion programme, was to effect high levels of skill in a child's first and second language. Development of the first language - the minority pupils' mother tongue - is regarded as culturally and educationally desirable. ("Additive bilingualism" is thus stated as a goal (Kessler and Quin 1982: 155). Arguments in favour of this programme are that the child's cognitive development is not disturbed, that he retains a feeling of identity and self-esteem and that the development of skill in a second language depends on his skill in his first language. It was found in Canada that teaching through the medium of the first language (French) for half of school time, was insufficient to maintain the pupils' competence in French in a situation where English is a language of status. The pupils' desire to speak French declined over the years (Cummins 1978: 401).)

5.4 ELLIOT'S CHOICE OF A LANGUAGE MEDIUM

Elliot (1980: 16-21) is concerned with French as a second language in Canada. He distinguishes four programmes through which French can be taught as a second language at school. These four programmes will now be discussed.

(1) Core programme

This programme makes provision for instruction in French as a subject for about 60 hours a year. According to Elliot (1980: 16) 300 to 400 hours of instruction is necessary to enable a person to speak French fluently.* For this reason the core programme will have to last for at least five years if it is to succeed. The aim of the programme is to give pupils a basic knowledge of French.

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* There are different opinions on the amount of time that is needed to learn to speak a language fluently. The Council of Europe found that more than a thousand hours are necessary to reach the threshold level of the target language (RGN Report 1986: 32).

(2) **Extensive, intensive or partial immersion programme**

In the extensive, intensive or partial immersion programme, about 90 minutes a day are spent on instruction in French. This time is divided between instruction in French as a subject and instruction in one other subject through the medium of French. The aim of the programme is to promote partial bilingualism.

(3) **Immersion programme**

French is used as the medium of instruction in all subjects for the first three to four years. In about Grade 4, English is introduced as a subject. Thereafter some of the subjects are taught in English. The number of subjects which are taught in English increases yearly until half of the subjects are taught in English. The objective of the programme is total bilingualism.

(4) **Late immersion**

Pupils are subjected to a core programme up to Grade 7, when late immersion occurs. The aim of late immersion is also to foster complete bilingualism.

Although the different programmes cannot really be compared because of their divergent aims, this has in fact been done. In British Columbia, a Grade 3 class, which had followed a three-year immersion programme was compared with a Grade 7 class which had been subjected to a core programme for three years (French second language as a subject). As far as vocabulary and auditory conceptualization are concerned, the immersion group (French second language as the medium of instruction for all the subjects) fared twice as well as the core programme group. Another study, also in British Columbia, showed that a Grade 5 group which had followed a partial immersion programme (cf. Paragraph 5.4(2)), for six years (the six years refer to one year Kindergarten and grades 1 to 5), did not do as well as a control group which was subjected to immersion, but fared better than a core programme group which was also used as control group (Elliot 1980: 21).

5.5 REAGAN AND NTSHOE'S OPTIONS FOR THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Reagan and Ntshoe (1987: 6) propose a bilingual transition programme for the South Africa of the future. English has the status of a relatively central lingua franca in the country and also enables international communication. Accordingly Reagan and Ntshoe feel that English ought to become the country's official/national language. Bearing in mind the population's language diversity and the relatively large number of people who cannot speak English, they believe that the different provinces should institute regional languages to supplement the national language (English). In such a situation the pupils should master both the national language (English) and the regional language. Reagan and Ntshoe (1987: 6) propose that the initial medium of instruction for pupils whose mother tongue is the regional language, should be that language. Most children will thus initially be taught in their mother tongue.

Pupils living in a region where their mother tongue is not the dominant language can, through special programmes, be helped to acquire a minimum standard of proficiency in the dominant regional language to enable them to communicate in that language. Initially, English would be offered as a subject and gradually it would become the medium of instruction. English would then be the only medium of instruction and the regional language would be offered as a subject.

5.6 THE NEW CONCURRENT APPROACH TO THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

According to Jacobson (1982: 184) the new concurrent approach is implemented mainly in California. In this approach the pupils up to the end of Grade 3 (third school year) are taught in two languages: their mother tongue and English. A bilingual teacher uses both languages concurrently, each for the same period of time. The teacher changes over from one language to the other in the classroom in response to the pupils' involvement in the teaching situation. Should the teacher observe that the pupils' interest is waning and that they cannot understand the content of the lesson, he would change over from the language being used to the other. From Grade 4 (fourth school year) English is used as the sole medium of instruction. Jacobson (1982: 184) considers that by this stage the pupil will have adjusted emotionally to the fact that English will be the future medium of instruction and he will have developed adequate proficiency in English. His mother tongue will also have undergone further development and he will have become acquainted with the appropriate use of English and his mother tongue in the community (Jacobson 1982: 181-192).

5.7 NADKARNI'S OPTIONS FOR THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Nadkarni (1983: 154-155) has two proposals regarding the medium of instruction for multilingual countries. The first option is the use of different languages for the teaching of different subjects, such as English for Science and Mathematics, and an indigenous language for other subjects. The second option is to teach most subjects in two languages - the main medium and the supplementary medium. The main medium would be used for both teaching and examination purposes, while the supplementary medium would be used for teaching alone. The supplementary medium would therefore function only at a receptive level.

5.8 THE UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR NAMIBIA'S (UNIN) OPTIONS FOR A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION[1)]

The language medium options discussed in the UNIN report (1981: 89-100) are those which the compilers regard as pedagogically and/or socio-politically acceptable for a new Namibian government which commits itself to implementing English as the official language. Two groups of possibilities are set out. The first group can be applied to the conventional school system which is presently used in

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1) Paragraph 5.5 and all its subparagraphs were compiled on the basis of the United Nations Institute for Namibia Report (UNIN Report).

most African countries, namely a twelve year structure which can be subdivided into a junior primary, senior primary and secondary cycle. The second group applies to a nine year cycle of basic education (educational cycle) which countries such as Zambia, Botswana and Namibia have proposed, but not yet fully implemented.

5.8.1 Options for a language medium for conventional education systems

(1) Junior primary school level

The following four options are proposed for the junior primary school level:

(i) A local language as the medium of instruction and as a subject, and English to be phased in as a subject.

(ii) A local language as the medium of instruction and as a subject, and English as a subject.

(iii) A local language as the medium of instruction for two years and thereafter English as the medium of instruction with the local language and English as subjects.

(iv) English as the medium of instruction and as a subject, and a local language as a subject.

(a) A local language as the medium of instruction and as a subject, and English to be phased in as a subject

1) Advantages

* An uninterrupted concentration on acquiring one language (namely the child's best language which may also be his mother tongue) during the formative years or years of basic education, promotes language acquisition.

* Such a policy will set minimum requirements for teachers in respect of the education situation, especially in rural areas where teachers and pupils generally speak the same language.

* English can be phased in as a subject at a stage when it will not handicap the child's proficiency in the local language.

2) Disadvantages

* If English is only phased in as a subject in the first four school years, exposure to the language is inadequate to acquire language proficiency and not enough attention is paid to English to implement it successfully as the official language.

* Pupils in urban areas are exposed to English prior to school entry, and at school can benefit more if English is used as the language medium.

* The phasing in of English could be uncontrolled, and progress through the syllabus might not occur at the same rate.

* The teaching corps can be unprepared for a real bilingual approach.

(b) A local language as the medium of instruction and as a subject, and English as a subject

1) Advantages

* During the decisive years (junior primary school phase) of a child's cognitive development and socialisation, instruction in the language in which he is most proficient, is the most advantageous.

* The mother tongue as the medium of instruction will lay a firm foundation for the mother tongue as a subject which will still be offered when the medium of instruction has changed to English.

* In this option, as in the previous one, cognitive skills developed through the mother tongue are carried over to learning in another language.

* By introducing English as a subject at the start of primary school instruction, the urgency of exposing pupils to English for as long as possible is recognised.

* The syllabus will be more uniform in respect of the introduction of and progress in English.

2) Disadvantages

* Successful implementation of this option for a medium of instruction demands that teachers have a command of the mother tongue of the region as well as a command of English. Teachers with such qualifications are seldom available and extensive training programmes will be required to equip them for their educational task.

* Experience in other African countries has shown that where English is the official language, the quality of primary school education is extremely poor. This is one of the major problems to be solved. Hence if this option for a language medium is to succeed, there must be sufficient skilled and experienced teachers in English to use English as the medium of instruction as well as to teach it as a subject in primary school.

(c) A local language as the medium of instruction for two years, and thereafter English as the medium of instruction with the local language and English as subjects

1) Advantages

This option utilises a child's learning ability in the early years to develop proficiency in both his mother tongue and in English as the official language. It would appear from the experiences of other multilingual countries that such a policy does not place too much pressure on the child in respect of language acquisition.

2) Disadvantages

* Teachers will have to be bilingual, and able to offer most subjects (if not all) in two languages.

* The learning situation can be confusing for the child because early in his school career he is confronted with two languages.

* The child's proficiency in both the mother tongue and English is inadequately ingrained. Hence he does not have a proper command of either of the two languages.

* Cognitive retrogression and poor performance at school could be the result of this option.

(d) English as the medium of instruction and as a subject, and a local language as a subject

1) Advantages

* Such a policy promotes national unity by suppressing potential ethnolinguistic diversity.

* Uniformity of textbooks and syllabuses is possible because only one medium of instruction (English) is used.

* Mobility of teachers and pupils is facilitated because pupils are taught in the same language throughout the country.

* Exposure to English increases pupils' proficiency in the language.

2) Disadvantages

* Since instruction in the first year is not through the mother tongue, cognitive development may be retarded.

* When English is taught by teachers who have not been professionally trained and who have not been trained adequately in English, two and even more generations of children can suffer educationally.

(In the middle of this century multilingual and multiracial countries followed this policy. During the seventies many of them changed their language medium policy because children were suffering educationally. Some of these countries were Ghana, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia and Tanzania.)

(2) Senior primary school level

At senior primary school level the following three options are put forward for a language policy:

(i) A local language as the medium of instruction and as a subject, and English as a subject.

(ii) A local language and English as the medium of instruction (a mixed language medium) with the local language and English as subjects.

(iii) English as the medium of instruction and as a subject, and a local language as a subject.

(a) A local language as the medium of instruction and as a subject, and English as a subject

1) Advantages

* Use of a local language as the medium of instruction at senior primary school level implies that it is also used at junior primary school level. Continued application of a local language will consolidate the work at the two school levels and promote uniformity of syllabuses.

* Children will be exposed longer to their home language, which is also a school language. This will increase their proficiency in their mother tongue and could lead to better scholastic performance and a decrease in the failure rate.

* Availability of educational and study material in local languages should ensure that pupils are not handicapped by a shortage of educational and study material in the teaching situation.

* If enough trained teachers are used to teach English as a subject at this school level, a sound initial command of English should be within the reach of pupils.

2) Disadvantages

* One could contend that if a local language was the medium of instruction in the junior primary school phase, pupils were given enough time to become proficient in this language, and it is therefore unnecessary to also use the local language as the medium of instruction during the senior primary school level.

* At this stage pupils have already moved through the critical formative years with maximum linguistic ease and adapted to the new experience of school life without language interruption. Hence the need to retain a local language as medium in the senior primary school phase is less significant.

(b) A local language and English as the medium of instruction (a mixed language medium) with the local language and English as subjects

This choice of a language medium implies that the senior primary school phase may be regarded as a transitional stage in the medium of instruction. The following methods can be used to implement this policy:

(i) Certain subjects (Science and Mathematics, for example) are taught in English, while others (such as social sciences) are taught in a local language.

(ii) English and a local language are used together or separately when conceptual or other needs arise.

(iii) English can replace a local language as the medium of instruction at a suitable stage in the cycle. The exact stage might differ for rural and urban areas.

1) **Advantages**

One of the aims of this option is to try to extend the period of exposure to a local language as the medium of instruction, while English is phased in, in a flexible way. This increases proficiency in the local language and postpones the change-over to another medium.

2) **Disadvantages**

* Confusion might arise. The policy is complex and may be interpreted differently by different schools and teachers.

* Acquisition of English can be handicapped by the constant use of a local language because of comprehension problems.

* Teachers are not fully proficient in both the local language and English.

* Pupils should be fairly proficient in a language before they can be schooled in a subject through the medium of this language.

* A pupil can suffer serious damage if, in his basic instruction, he is unable to understand and apply certain essential concepts because of problems with the medium of instruction.

(c) **English as the medium of instruction and as a subject, and a local language as a subject**

1) **Advantages**

* Uniformity of textbooks and supplementary educational and study material is promoted.

* Immigrant teachers from Africa and elsewhere can be used to overcome the shortage of teachers.

* Teachers and pupils have the advantage of greater mobility because the same language medium is used throughout the country.

* Early implementation of English as the medium of instruction will lead to this language becoming the lingua franca.

* English is introduced as the language medium at a stage when the child's ability to acquire languages is still good.

2) **Disadvantages**

* Three or four years of instruction in the mother tongue medium in junior primary school can be insufficient to ensure mother tongue proficiency.

* Although English is used as the medium of instruction throughout the country, pupils' instruction in their mother tongue will suffer, should they move to another region because teachers do not know all the indigenous languages of the country.

* A transition to English as the medium of instruction for all subjects, except for the mother tongue, will lead to neglect of cultural identity.

(3) Secondary school level

The following two language policies can be considered at secondary school level:

(i) English as the medium of instruction, and English and a local language as subjects.

(ii) A local language and English as the medium of instruction (a mixed language medium) with the local language and English as subjects.

(a) English as the medium of instruction, and English and a local language as subjects

1) Advantages

* If English is the official language, its use as the medium of instruction at secondary school level will give it prominence.

* Uniformity of textbooks will be possible.

* Mobility of teachers and pupils will occur without problems.

* Use of English as the medium of instruction will provide access to specialised published material.

* Use of a single language as the official language will give impetus to national integration.

2) Disadvantages

The UNIN Report (1981: 94) does not identify any disadvantages in the use of English as the medium of instruction, and English and a local language as subjects.

(b) A local language and English as the medium of instruction (a mixed language medium) with the local language and English as subjects

1) Advantages

* This option will make the full use of cognitive skills through the medium of the mother tongue possible.

* Local languages will be given greater status, which is important for national culture and identity.

* English should be used the most at this school level because pupils are preparing themselves for tertiary education or the occupational world.

2) Disadvantages

* Use of the two media of instruction (an indigenous language and English) depends too much on the teacher's discretion and competence, and he will have difficulty following uniform syllabuses.

* The costs involved in such a policy will be extremely high, since all materials will have to be duplicated in various local (indigenous) languages.

5.8.2 Options for a medium of instruction for the proposed system of nine years of basic education (as proposed in the UNIN Report (1981))

According to the system of nine years of basic education, education will last for nine years with an additional three years of secondary school instruction. The choice of a medium of instruction to be discussed applies for the first nine years of basic education. The same options that apply to the conventional education system are also valid for the three years of secondary school instruction.

The following four options can be considered for the system of nine years of basic education:

(i) A local language as the medium of instruction for six years and English as the medium of instruction for three years, while both languages are offered as subjects for the full nine years.

(ii) A local language as the medium of instruction for four years and English as the medium of instruction for five years, while both languages are offered as subjects for the full nine years.

(iii) A mixed medium of instruction, while English and a local language are offered as subjects for the full nine years.

(iv) English as the medium of instruction for the full nine years, while English and a local language are also offered as subjects for the full nine years.

(1) A local language as the medium of instruction for six years and English as the medium of instruction for three years, while both languages are offered as subjects for the full nine years

(a) Advantages

* This option will allocate the pedagogically desired amount of time to the local language, while English as the official language will also be introduced as the medium of instruction before the end of the school cycle, during the last three years in fact.

* Since this system will be compulsory, the entire school-going population will have an equal opportunity of mastering English.

* Since pupils should have a command of the language at the end of the nine years to enable them to communicate in the occupational world, the final three years of secondary education will probably be more job-orientated. For this reason, English is regarded as a suitable medium of instruction.

(b) Disadvantages

One can reason that since English is the official language, the option for English as a language medium (introduction of English as the language medium after six years) is introduced at too late a stage.

(2) A local language as the medium of instruction for four years and English as the medium of instruction for five years, while both languages are offered as subjects for the full nine years

(a) Advantages

* The first four years are generally regarded as adequate to establish proficiency in the local language.

* A child is allowed sufficient time to adapt to school without language problems during the first four years and to retain close ties with his parental home, community and culture.

* English as the language medium for five years is adequate to ensure that each pupil is afforded the opportunity of acquiring the official language.

(b) Disadvantages

* Teachers will have to be fully bilingual.

* The interruption in the educational continuum by changing the language medium as early as the fifth year, could mean at this stage that pupils might not be proficient in any one of the languages.

* From the experience of other African countries, it would appear that often local languages are not deemed important enough for examination purposes, educational inspection and provision of relevant educational material. Although the four year period is long enough to develop basic proficiency in a local language, this is frequently not the case because of the abovementioned stumbling blocks.

(3) A mixed medium of instruction, while English and a local language are offered as subjects for the full nine years

(a) Advantages

This option implies an integrated approach to the whole curriculum so that subjects can be introduced to pupils gradually and in easy phases and through the use of various relevant and prescribed educational media.

(b) Disadvantages

This policy requires careful planning and preparation:

(i) Teachers must be bilingual.

(ii) Syllabuses will have to be compiled so that they are available for the different language media at school.

(iii) Teachers will have to be trained to enable them to teach properly within such a complex system.

(iv) Such a system will have to be monitored and co-ordinated to ensure uniformity.

(4) <u>English as the medium of instruction for the full nine years, while English and a local language are also offered as subjects for the full nine years</u>

(a) <u>Advantages</u>

* English is stressed as the official language and uniformity is promoted.

* Such an option is relatively economical since all educational material need only be provided in one language.

(b) <u>Disadvantages</u>

* If English is introduced as the medium of instruction from the outset, teachers will have to be prepared to implement the policy as soon as the country gains independence.

* Local languages will suffer. Since these languages will not be used as medium of instruction at any stage, their value will decline in the eyes of inhabitants.

* The child's conceptual and developmental progress can be impeded.

* A child may never become literate in his own language (the language of his family and culture).

* As in other countries, teachers may use the child's mother tongue to explain subject matter that he does not understand, or when the teacher's knowledge of English is not up to scratch, he may teach through the medium of the mother tongue. Confusion of tongues could result.

5.9 MBAMBA'S OPTIONS FOR THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION FOR SWA/NAMIBIA

The medium of instruction proposed by Mbamba (1982: 164-165) would be applicable to SWA/Namibia after independence. As proposed in the UNIN (United Institute for Namibia) Report, Mbamba believes that English should be the official language of Namibia. With regard to the medium of instruction in schools he makes the following proposals:

(i) The mother tongue or group language should be used as the medium of instruction in the junior primary phase (Substandard A to Standard 1). In the senior primary phase (Standard 2 to Standard 4/5) the medium should change to English. By this stage most pupils' mother tongue or group language should be well-developed.

(ii) In the absence of a written mother tongue or group language, English should be used as the medium of instruction until textbooks are available in the mother tongue concerned.

(iii) Dialects should be allowed, not as the medium of instruction, but as a conversational medium of environmental subjects, in order to provide for and promote the child's cultural development.

(iv) The official language, English, should be taught as a subject in all schools from Substandard A (Grade 1) to prepare pupils for the change to English as the medium of instruction in the senior primary school phase.

(v) More time should be allocated to teaching mother tongues or group languages* as subjects, and these languages as subjects should have equal status with the official language as subject for the primary schoolleaving examination, and in the process of selection for the secondary school.

The options regarding the medium of instruction selected by UNIN and by Mbamba are directly applicable to SWA/Namibia. The other options can be applied to the language situation in SWA/Namibia. The mother tongue thus refers to the indigenous languages (African languages) of SWA/Namibia and the foreign language to Afrikaans and/or English.

5.10 CONCLUSION

Although researchers have put forward various options for a medium of instruction, it would appear throughout that mother tongue instruction promotes pupils' cognitive and affective (emotional) development and cultural retention. Another striking feature is teachers' inability to use a foreign language as the medium of instruction. The result of this situation is that pupils suffer educationally.

It would also seem that where English was introduced as the language medium at school (former British colonies) - regardless of the stage at which this occurred - pupils' scholastic performance was poor. They did not seem to be able to master mother tongue and foreign language skills. Hence they were incompetent in both languages.

Proponents of introducing a foreign language as the medium of instruction advance the following main reasons for their viewpoint: Curtailment of expenditure and effecting uniformity in education.

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* The group languages to which Mbamba (1982: 165) refers, are Oshiwambo in Ovamboland, Rukwangali in Kavango and Sybiya in Caprivi.

CHAPTER 6

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE OF A LANGUAGE MEDIUM POLICY AT SCHOOL

6.1 CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING A LANGUAGE MEDIUM POLICY

Before a language medium policy is chosen, the options should be measured against certain criteria. The following points should be borne in mind:

(1) The actual social needs of the society in respect of a language medium. The authorities must establish whether the need for a universal language is not as great in non-urban areas as in multilingual cities (Ela Ulrih-Atena 1976: 430; UNIN 1981: 12; Hartford 1983: 303).

(2) Pedagogic principles should be considered (Ela Ulrih-Atena 1976: 430). An example of a pedagogic principle is that a child learns quicker through his mother tongue than through a foreign language.

(3) The interests of both society and the individual with regard to a language medium should be considered (Ela Ulrih-Atena 1976: 430).

(4) The attitude or disposition of both teachers, the pupils and the parents to the language or languages offered as the medium of instruction or as a subject should be considered. The attitude to the utility value of the language should be considered. One should also take cognisance of the pupils' emotional attitude, which could have a socio-political origin. This attitude may be negative because members of one language group (usually a minority group) are negatively disposed to another group whose language or dialect they are forced to learn on account of social or economic pressure. The positive attitude of teachers and pupils to integration and the utility value of a foreign language can foster its acquisition, while a negative emotional attitude can handicap acquisition of the foreign language (Helm 1979: 166; Krashen 1981: 22; Andersson 1981: 3; RGN Report 1981: 212).

(5) Mastery of the language or languages chosen. Pupils learn best in the language they can best master (AGN Report 1982: 13; Oosthuizen 1970: 1; Unesco 1953: 47-50; RGN Report 1981: 44).

(6) The language chosen "has to be capable of conveying the particular complexities and subtleties of the relevant content matter at the level required" (AGN Report 1982: 13). The language should give access to modern technology (Whiteley 1983: 70).

(7) Entrance requirements to a higher level of education (AGN Report 1982: 13; RGN Report 1981b: 144).

(8) Availability of suitable and sufficient school literature (Gorman 1970: 27; AGN Report 1982: 108; Mbamba 1982: 162).

(9) Availability of properly trained teachers (Gorman 1970: 27; AGN Report 1982: 108; Rubin 1983: 13).

(10) The role and status of the language or languages as it/they crystallises/crystallise among the population (AGN Report 1982: 105; Rubin 1982: 13).

(11) The official language policy of the government (AGN Report 1982: 105).

(12) The percentage of the population that speaks or understands the language or languages. A study of the geographic scope of the language/languages is also recommended (Moumouni 1968: 110; Houis 1976: 404-405; Gorman 1970: 27).

(13) The existence of publishers who publish in the language or languages, as well as use of the language or languages by the public media (Gorman 1970: 27; Houis 1976: 404-405).

(14) The opportunity to use the language or languages outside the formal school situation (Gorman 1970: 27; Rubin 1983: 13).

(15) The possibility of using the language or languages outside the borders of the country and for international communication (UNIN 1981: 58; Houis 1976: 404-405; Whiteley 1983: 70).

(16) The existence of a standardised orthography and a relatively easy phonological transcription system, as well as the possibility of further developing the language or languages (Moumouni 1968: 110; Gorman 1970: 27).

(17) The influence of the language or languages on the community, that is, whether use thereof will foster unity or division among the people (UNIN 1981: 58).

(18) The financial implications of instituting the language or languages as the medium of instruction (AGN Report 1982: 13).

(19) A language medium policy should be flexible to a great extent to meet the needs of the individual pupils and to do justice to the parents' responsibility (RGN Report 1981b: 145).

6.2 FACTORS WITH A POSSIBLE INFLUENCE ON THE CHOICE OF A LANGUAGE MEDIUM POLICY

Besides the criteria to be considered in choosing a language medium policy, cognisance should also be taken of the following factors when deciding on a medium of instruction:

(1) The policy pursued by the government(s) prior to independence, is a crucial factor (Helm 1979: 157).

(2) The increasing extent to which place was made for indigenous languages alongside the language/languages of the government prior to independence (*inter alia* French, English and German), which for many years dominated the African languages (AGN Report 1982: 34).

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(3) In Africa, however, the foreign language/languages retains/retain its/their hold as lingua franca, especially in administrative and government circles, or as language medium and as a subject in the senior classes or in tertiary education, or as the international medium of communication and in the business world (AGN Report 1982: 35).

(4) Mastery of a foreign language is still regarded as important and as a status symbol - hence it is taught seriously and enthusiastically (AGN Report 1982: 35).

(5) In countries with a heterogeneous population composition (multi-national countries), the foreign language plays a crucial role as a medium of communication (AGN Report 1982: 36).

(6) Continuous exposure to a language actively fosters the acquisition of language skills, especially the oral component. A language is not only mastered inside the classroom situation, but should be continually practised outside the classroom (AGN Report 1982: 51).

(7) The choice of a language medium policy is definitely influenced by the particular educational authority's view of the actual goal of primary school. One view is that the aim of primary school education is to provide basic education to the majority of pupils, who for various reasons will not be afforded the opportunity of studying further. Alternatively, primary school can be regarded as the preparation of the minority of pupils who will in fact be able to advance to secondary and tertiary levels of education. Since in most African countries insufficient provision is made for secondary school training, primary education *per se* is regarded as complete training (literacy) and not as preparation for further training (UNIN 1981: 58).

(8) When a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction from the beginning of he child's school career, home-school adjustment problems may develop (UNIN 1981: 57).

(9) When a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction at school, the mother tongue is still entrenched as the language spoken in the home and socially in a community or region. (Haasbroek 1985: 5).

(10) In practice - even in a country that pursues a foreign language medium policy throughout primary school - indigenous languages are often used as medium of instruction in the first school years (UNIN 1981: 25). (Author's remark: First school years can mean the first three to four years of school.)

(11) Where a foreign language and the mother tongue are the medium of instruction or are offered as subjects, the foreign language is emphasised more than the mother tongue (UNIN 1981: 25).

(12) It is wrong to assume that a teacher who speaks a particular language is able to teach the language or use it as the medium of instruction (Taiwo 1976: 414).

(13) Changing over from the mother tongue to a foreign language as the medium of instruction. The policy in many African countries is to use indigenous languages as the medium of instruction in the first four school years (three to four years) and to change over to English in the higher primary classes. The results of such a change-over merit consideration in respect of pupils' scholastic performance. A diversity of indigenous languages, however, are spoken by varying numbers of people in each country. "Obviously then ... there are bound to be some of the pupils, in a number of places, for whom the approved language of instruction will be foreign, or at best a second language but not mother tongue" (Henka 1976: 455). Unesco (RGN Report 1981: 23) proposed the following solution: "When for practical reasons, the principle of mother tongue instruction cannot be applied, it is suggested that a medium should be substituted which is as closely to the life, experience and culture of the child as possible. In mixed areas where black languages are spoken, it will be possible to use a regional language or the vernacular of the largest group of pupils as the common medium without subjecting the minority groups to great hardship."

(14) If there is a change-over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction, the teacher who must now use this language as the medium of instruction for the first time, will have to be specially trained and equipped. His command of the foreign language has to be good, because he has to set the example for pupils in respect of language usage. He must adapt his usage to the child's level of proficiency in that language. The teacher must also know his technical termino logy in the foreign language (Verslag van die Transkeise Kommissie van Ondersoek (Translation: Report of the Transkeian Commission of Inquiry) 1962: 19; Moumouni 1968: 287).

(15) If the foreign language which is used as the medium of instruction, belongs to a culture that hardly differs from the child's own culture, his main problems in language acquisition will be linguistic. If, however, the foreign language belongs to a culture that differs radically from that of the child (for example, English is the language medium for a Nigerian child), his learning problems will increase. Not only does he come into contact with a new language, but also with new concepts which are or might be culturally bound (Unesco 1953: 47-50).

(16) If bilingualism cannot be properly established, mixing of languages occurs (Haasbroek 1985: 5; cf. Cameron and Hurst 1983: 459-516).

(17) The better command a child has of his own language (mother tongue), the easier he is able to acquire a foreign language (De Reus 1978: 268-269).

(18) When a foreign language medium is used, the language of school textbooks must be carefully graded so that the child is able to master it (Verslag van die Transkeise Kommissie van Onder-

soek (Translation: Report of the Transkeian Commission of Inquiry) 1962: 19).

(19) **The availability of accurate and reliable information on the language situation in a country can influence decisions on policy (including policy on the medium of instruction) and can be of great value in the planning and implementing of a language policy (Whiteley 1983: 68).**

6.3 CONCLUSION

The criteria for choosing a language medium policy and the factors that influence their choice should seriously be considered by the educational authorities in SWA/Namibia when decisions are made on a language medium policy.

CHAPTER 7

TRANSITION TO A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Thus far the concept "transition" has been used frequently in this report, mainly with reference to changing from one medium of instruction (usually the mother tongue) to another (a foreign language). The aim of the report, however, is not only to determine the desired medium of instruction for schools, but (as mentioned before) to establish the optimum stage for introducing English and Afrikaans (the official languages of SWA/Namibia) in primary schools in SWA/Namibia. This chapter focuses specifically on literature dealing with the transition from one language medium to another - usually from the mother tongue to a second or foreign language.

7.2 THE STAGE AT WHICH PUPILS SHOULD CHANGE TO A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Educationists subscribe to two main viewpoints regarding the stage at which pupils should change from one medium of instruction to another. The first group holds that the transition should be deferred for as long as possible, while the second group maintains that transition should occur between the second and fourth school years. A few transition models will now be discussed.

7.2.1 Deferred transition to a foreign language as the medium of instruction

The report of the CASME Regional Workshop (Helm 1979: 315) states that in a developing country the best policy is to change to a foreign medium of instruction at the beginning of secondary school since in most countries there is usually a large group of primary school pupils who are not going to attend secondary school. Thus the problem of changing to a foreign language affects only a smaller and usually more gifted group of pupils at secondary school.

Unesco (1953: 48) said the following about conversion in 1953: "On educational grounds we recommend that the use of the mother tongue be extended to as late a stage in education as possible. In particular, pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue, because they understand it best and because to begin their school life in the mother tongue will make the break between home and school as small as possible."

The Advisory Committee for Research in the Human Sciences in SWA/Namibia (Advieskomitee vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing in SWA/Namibië - AGN Report 1982: 60) concludes that the transition to a foreign language as the medium of instruction should be deferred for as long as possible, preferably to the beginning of the senior secondary school phase. The report substantiates its argument with the psychological principle that formation and retention of concepts occur best through the medium of the mother tongue. Another reason advanced is that the proficiency in English and Afrikaans of non-Afrikaans- and non-English-speaking pupils in SWA/Namibia is unsatisfactory far into secondary school.

Bearing in mind, however, all the practical problems and costs involved in providing literature and trained teachers in the indigenous languages and the fact that so many early school leavers must have a minimum level of language proficiency with a view to finding employment, the committee maintains that a compromise should be found that best serves the education of the country. The committee suggests that the transition from indigenous languages to English or Afrikaans as the medium of instruction should not occur before Standard 5 (AGN Report 1982: 60).

According to the Transkeian Commission of Inquiry (1962: 20), the general educational principle that change of medium takes place as late as possible, should be reconciled with the actual situation in schools. If the mother tongue (Xhosa, in this case) still cannot be used as the medium of instruction in secondary school, and if the transition to the other language medium should be gradual, then the transition should start in primary school. The commission recommends that the mother tongue be retained as the language medium until the end of Standard 4.

7.2.2 Transition between the second and fourth school year

On the strength of various considerations already discussed, Helm (1979: 352) recommends specifically with regard to the black nations in the RSA that pupils should enjoy mother tongue education for the first four school years at least (that is, up to and including Standard 2).

The National Education Commission (1978: 51) which studied the language medium policy in Bophuthatswana, concluded that the optimum stage at which English can replace Tswana as the language medium is Standard 3. By the time that pupils reach Standard 3, their field of experience and interest has already broadened. At that stage General Science has already been introduced as a subject, and in History and Geography pupils start to move outside their immediate environment. English is described as "... the window to the outside world". Thousands of pupils will also not have the opportunity to further their school training after the six years of compulsory education, that is, after Standard 4. It is hoped, however, that these pupils will come into contact with non-formal education at a later stage. Since most of the instructional material is in English, these pupils will be severely handicapped if they cannot cope with English as the language medium. It is essential therefore, that by the end of the compulsory school years, pupils will at least have been introduced to English as the language medium.

At a Unesco Conference held in Nigeria in 1952, the proposal was put forward that the ideal medium of instruction in the first four years of primary school is the child's mother tongue. Reasons advanced for this standpoint were *inter alia*, the importance of the mother tongue for the formation of concepts, cultural preservation and bridging the gap between home and school (RGN Report 1981c: 19).

7.3 CRITERIA TO DETERMINE THE STAGE OF TRANSITION TO A FOREIGN MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

According to the AGN Report (1982: 40) a language proficiency norm should be established to serve as the minimum requirement for a change-over to a foreign medium of instruction. It should then be possible to determine scientifically at the end of which standard the minimum acceptable language proficiency is achieved. Should the research results show that the ideal stage for a change in the medium of instruction occurs in a standard that (for various reasons) is too high for the educational authorities, the reduced number of school years during which the required language proficiency can be achieved will have to be determined with the aid of enriched syllabuses for the future medium of instruction, or through other available means. The principle of changing over to the new medium of instruction only after the attainment of a minimum proficiency should, according to this report (AGN Report), never be violated.

In contrast Spencer (1963: 110) maintains that the child's intelligence should be the criterion for the stage at which the change is made from one medium to the other. The more intelligent pupils can be placed in a stream which converts from one medium to the other at an earlier stage and more quickly. The less intelligent pupils can change over more slowly at a later stage, without holding back the more intelligent group.

According to Lanham (1986: 3) the baseline of pupils' readiness to learn through the medium of a second language is often measured by successful problem solving through the use of words and structures in the second language, skill in using the second language descriptively or in explanation, and the ability to read with comprehension. However, he considers these criteria inadequate. To enable the pupil to be taught successfully in a second language, three cognitive areas, namely numeric, time and reading skills must be well established. Before a pupil is ready to be taught through the medium of a second language he should be a competent reader. He should first place the information in the text against the background of his own previous experience. Secondly, on the strength of what he has already read, he should be able to anticipate what is likely to happen in the rest of the text. Finally, the pupil should be able to construct the meaning of the entire text and to interrelate its parts. When evaluating a child's readiness to receive instruction in a second language, one should look not only at <u>what</u> the child knows, but at <u>how</u> he knows it and at how <u>skilled</u> he is in implementing this knowledge. The <u>process</u> is therefore just as important as the <u>product</u>.

7.4 METHOD OF TRANSITION TO A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

7.4.1 <u>Gradual transition to another medium of instruction</u>

According to the literature, the general opinion is that the best results are achieved in introducing a foreign language as the medium of instruction if the transition is gradual over a fairly long period. Different methods can be adopted to gradually change to another language medium at school.

(1) Subject-by-subject transition to another medium of instruction (foreign language)

Changing the medium of instruction subject by subject means that in a specific period (say, two or three years) the transition to another language medium will occur with shorter or longer intervals in certain subjects (Helm 1979: 352). There is controversy about the sequence of subjects that should be followed when changing to another language medium. According to Helm (1979: 319) the change should first be in the "literary subjects" (social sciences) and then in "natural science" subjects. Wilkens (1972: 12) recommends that initially transition should take place in the "visual" subjects (practical subjects), such as Woodwork and Metalwork, and later in the "conceptual" subjects, such as Mathematics and History. Spencer (1963: 100) supports Wilkens, and also holds that "religious subjects" (Bible Studies) should be offered throughout the school career in the child's mother tongue.

The Transkeian Commission of Inquiry (1962: 20) recommended that the foreign language (English) which is used as the medium of instruction in secondary school should be introduced in Standard 5 for teaching Arithmetic and Nature Study. Social Study and Hygiene can be taught through the foreign medium in Standard 6. The medium of instruction in practical subjects and Music should be optional, that is, either in the foreign language or in the mother tongue. Religious instruction should always be in the mother tongue. After their study in Bophuthatswana, the National Education Committee (1978: 51-52) recommended that Arithmetic/Mathematics be offered through the medium of English (the foreign language) as early as Standard 2; Religious Instruction should still be offered in Tswana (the mother tongue) in Standards 3 and 4. In Standard 3 (the year in which there is an official transition to the foreign language medium, teachers should be allowed to revert to Tswana when pupils fail to understand something in English.

(2) Joint use of the mother tongue and the foreign language as the medium of instruction

The mother tongue can be used in various ways in conjunction with the foreign language as the medium of instruction. A lesson can, for example, be revised through the medium of the foreign language. Another option is to present the lesson through the medium of the foreign language and sometimes to use the mother tongue to explain difficult and foreign concepts. A lesson can also be presented partly in the mother tongue and partly in the foreign language (Helm 1979: 318; Verslag van die Transkeise Kommissie van Ondersoek (Translation: Report of the Transkeian Commission of Inquiry) 1962: 19).

7.4.2 Immediate transition to a foreign language as the medium of instruction

The medium of instruction for all subjects can also be immediately changed from one year to the next. This type of transition seems to be ineffective because it can cause "language shock" and a consequent high failure rate (Cameron and Hurst 1983: 207; Gorman 1970: 10).

7.4.3 Arguments in favour of an early or a later transition to a foreign language as the medium of instruction

Arguments in favour of an early or a later change of the medium of instruction correspond largely to those in favour of mother tongue or foreign language instruction which have already been discussed. Additional arguments are as follows:

(i) According to the exposure theory, a child's knowledge of a foreign language improves the longer he is exposed to it (Helm 1979: 322; UNIN 1981: 58).

(ii) The longer a child can use his mother tongue as the medium of instruction (in Mathematics and Science too), the better the imprinting of concepts and the easier the transition to another medium at a later stage (RGN Report 1981c: 5).

7.5 EXPERIMENTS ON THE TRANSITION TO A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Experiments on the transition to another language medium can be divided into three categories: those of which the findings are in favour of direct transition; those that recommend early transition or transition at a later stage, and those that investigated additional factors that relate to transition to another language medium.

7.5.1 Experiments in favour of direct transition to a foreign language as the medium of instruction in the first school year

(1) Canada: Immersion programmes introduced

(a) St Lambert Experiment (Nijsse 1980: 24-26; Swain 1982: 83; Swain 1978: 238-241)

During the sixties, Canadian educationists and parent communities expressed concern about the standard of second language instruction in Canadian schools. They realised that 20 minutes of French a day is insufficient to learn French as a language. The result was a research programme at St Lambert in Montreal to examine ways of promoting bilingualism. The programme was conducted and assessed by Lambert, Macnamara, Tucker and other members of the psychology department at McGill University.

Research started in 1965/66 with two preprimary classes of English-speaking Canadian children who were taught exclusively through the medium of French up to the end of the first school year. In the second school year, they were taught the nuances of English as a language (their mother tongue) for one hour a day. In the third and fourth school years, about 40 % of the curriculum was taught in English and the remainder in French as the medium of instruction. In the fifth to seventh school year about 45 % of the curriculum was taught through the medium of English and about 55 % in French. The progress and achievement of the experimental group were compared annually with two selected control groups comprising children with the same socio-economic background and intellectual capacity. The two control groups followed conventional English-Canadian and French-Canadian academic programmes respectively.

The aim of the research was to achieve mother tongue proficiency in the second language (the foreign language) by using the second language as the language medium in the elementary school years. The main aim was to determine and evaluate the influence of instruction through the medium of the second language on the linguistic, intellectual and attitudinal development of the child. The researchers therefore had to establish how this immersion in the second language would influence progress in mother tongue proficiency (English), progress in second language proficiency (French), progress in the other curriculum subjects as well as the child's cognitive development. Extensive tests would be written annually from the end of the first school year to evaluate these aspects.

The research results at the end of the seventh school year were as follows:

(i) Members of the experimental group could understand, speak, read and write their mother tongue (English) just as well as members of the English-Canadian control group. There was no detrimental influence on mother tongue proficiency.

(ii) The experimental group's skill in French compared favourably with that of the French-Canadian control group, although their power of expression was less impressive than that of the French-speaking pupils and their pronunciation not as perfect.

(iii) The experimental group manifested no lag in respect of other curriculum subjects.

(iv) There was no negative influence on the experimental group's cognitive development.

Certain characteristics of the experiment - the involvement of parents with the programme, the fact that the participants were members of a minority group, the positive attitude towards the target language and the choice that could be made between mother tongue teaching and second language teaching - played an important role in the success of the programme.

The conclusion drawn was that although the objective of mother tongue proficiency was not fully achieved in the second language, greater scope for using French in the classroom meant that within a few years the children had acquired a fairly functional knowledge of the language, which far exceeded the level of proficiency of an ordinary "French-as-second-language" programme (Nijsse 1980: 24-26).

(b) Other immersion projects in Canada (Nijsse 1980: 26-30)

One of the outcomes of the St Lambert project was the launching of extensive research programmes on immersion in Canada. Three further projects were conducted with English-Canadian pupils to improve their command of French, namely the Ottawa-Carleton French Project, the Elgin Country Board Project and the Peel Country Board Project. The findings of the projects correspond with those of the St Lambert Experiment (Canada). An additional finding, however, revealed that

there was in fact a lag in mother tongue and second language proficiency, although this was very slight. The lag diminished from the third school year, and from the fourth school year disappeared completely.

(2) **Philippine Islands: Experiments on the transition to a foreign medium of instruction**

(a) **The Rizal Experiment** (Helm 1979: 78-81)

The Rizal Experiment was launched in 1960 with two main objectives. The aim of the first part of the experiment which lasted for three years, was to establish the optimum stage for Tagalog-speaking pupils (mother tongue speakers) to learn to read English. According to the hypothesis of the first part of the experiment, pupils who started reading English as early as Grade 1 would have a better command of the language at the end of Grade 3 than pupils who had started reading in English in Grade 2. (This part of the experiment actually belongs in the next section, but to provide an overall picture, has been included here.) The aim of the second part of the experiment which lasted for six years was to establish the optimum stage to change from the mother tongue (Tagalog) to English as the medium of instruction. According to the hypothesis of the second part of the experiment, there would be no difference between the achievements of the three groups of Tagalog pupils whose medium of instruction differed as follows:

(i) English as the medium of instruction from Grade 1 to 6.

(ii) Tagalog as the medium of instruction in Grade 1 to 2 and English as the medium of instruction from Grade 3 to 6.

(iii) Tagalog as the medium of instruction from Grade 1 to 4 and English as the medium of instruction from Grade 5 to 6.

To test the two hypotheses, five groups of Tagalog-speaking pupils were taught in English as set out in Table 7.1

Each group comprised six classes, each with 50 pupils. These 30 classes in different schools were located in different regions. The teachers involved in the experiment were trained to teach English and also to use it as the medium of instruction, but they lacked training in Tagalog. All five groups of pupils were tested at the end of the fourth and sixth school year.

As far as reading skill in English was concerned, there was a slight difference between the group which started learning to read English as early as Grade 1 and the other groups which started later. To test the hypothesis relating to the medium of instruction, all the achievement tests were compiled in English, Tagalog and in both the languages (English and Tagalog next to each other on the same page). According to results of the tests, there was a slight difference in the academic performance of the groups which had changed from the mother tongue to English as the language medium at different stages. A further finding was that the pupils whose medium of instruction

had been English from Grade 1 to 6, fared better at the end of Grade 6 in all the tests (in the English and Tagalog tests too) than the pupils who had initially enjoyed mother tongue instruction. On the strength of this finding it was concluded that proficiency in a second language is directly related to the number of years that it is used as the medium of instruction.

TABLE 7.1

THE STAGE AT WHICH ENGLISH WAS INTRODUCED (Helm 1979: 79)

	Starts with English reading in Grade 1	Starts with English reading in Grade 2
Starts with English as language medium in Grade 1	Group I	
Starts with English as language medium in Grade 3	Group II	Group IV
Starts with English as language medium in Grade 5	Group III	Group V

(b) The Revil Experiment (Helm 1979: 81-82)

Revil and his colleagues followed up the Rizal Experiment. They retested 64 % of the pupils involved in the Rizal Experiment in their second secondary school year (Grade 8).

Their findings confirmed those of the Rizal Experiment. Pupils who were taught from Grade 1 to 8 through the medium of English, achieved better in all the tests at the end of Grade 8 (as they had done at the end of Grade 6), than the pupils who had initially enjoyed mother tongue education. An important finding in the Revil Experiment was that as pupils progressed to the higher grades, the group that had changed to English as the medium of instruction only in Grade 5, performed just as well in English as the groups that had changed to this medium of instruction as early as Grade 3.

7.5.2 Experiments in favour of an early or a later transition to a foreign language as the medium of instruction

(1) Nigeria

The Six-Year (Yoruba Medium) Primary Education Project (Helm 1979: 99-110; Bamgbose 1984: 113; Hawes 1979: 81)

The Six-Year Primary Education Project was started in 1970 by the

Institute of Education at the University of Ife, in collaboration with the Federal Government with a view to finding the most suitable language policy for the instruction of Yoruba-speaking primary school pupils. Only one school (a primary school at Ile-Ife) was involved in the project from 1970 to 1973. In September 1973 the experiment was extended to ten surrounding rural primary schools. The first-mentioned school was known as the "Project School" and the latter schools as the "Proliferation Schools". The mother tongue of all the pupils involved in the project was Yoruba, an indigenous language.

At the start of the project in 1970, the first-year pupils of the Project School were divided into two groups, namely an experimental group comprising two classes and a control group consisting of one class. There were initially 40 pupils in each class. In the ensuing years the first-year pupils of the Project School were subdivided in the same way each year. In the Proliferation Schools the experimental and control groups were in different schools. In 1973 (the first year of the experiment) there were eight experimental and two control classes, and in the subsequent years, the same number of experimental and control classes were added every year. There were approximately 40 pupils in both the experimental and control classes.

In the experimental classes of the Project School all subjects, except English, were taught through the medium of Yoruba (pupils' mother tongue) from the first to the sixth school year. The curriculum material of Mathematics, Science, Social Study, Yoruba and English was specially prepared, and English taught by specially trained teachers of English. In the control classes all subjects except English, were taught through the medium of Yoruba, from the first to the third school year. Thereafter, the medium of instruction was changed to English. The curriculum material of the control classes differed only in respect of English, from that of the experimental classes. As far as English was concerned, special curriculum material was not used, but material which is normally used in Western countries. Moreover, English was not presented by specially trained teachers, but by ordinary class teachers. The set-up in the Proliferation Schools was the same, with one exception, namely that English in the experimental classes was taught by ordinary class teachers.

The experimental and control groups' achievements were compared on the basis of achievement tests, promotion examinations and verbal intelligence tests. Pupils' attitudes, intellectual development and self-concept were also noted. One of the findings was that the experimental classes fared better than the control classes in the achievement tests, promotion examinations and the verbal intelligence tests, but the difference was insignificant. Data collected on the failures in the experimental and control classes showed that in the control classes a larger percentage of pupils dropped out compared to the experimental classes. An important finding was that the experimental classes fared better in the achievement tests and in the promotion classes in English, their second language, than the control classes. Observations made of pupils when they were being taught through the medium of Yoruba and English, confirm that they enjoyed the classes, participated in discussions, and asked questions

when they understood the medium of instruction, while they were more passive and non-critical when they had problems with the language medium (when they did not understand the medium of instruction). There were also definite differences in attitude between the Mathematics pupils of the senior primary classes of the Project School and those of the "ordinary" schools. The first group manifested far more interest in Mathematics. Pupils in the experimental classes also showed more self-confidence and resourcefulness and were happier than their counterparts in the control classes. Use of the pupils' mother tongue (Yoruba) as the medium of instruction bridged the gap between home and school, since for the first time in about 150 years, teachers and parents could communicate about school matters.

To summarise, one can conclude that pupils who were taught through the medium of their mother tongue (Yoruba) for the first six years of their primary school training, fared academically better than pupils who, for the first three years of their primary school training, were taught through the medium of their mother tongue and then changed to English as language medium.

(2) The Philippine Islands

The Iloilo Experiment I (Helm 1979: 74-78)

The aim of Iloilo Experiment I (1948-1953) was to find out what happens when pupils are taught initially through the medium of their mother tongue and later through the medium of a second language.

Two groups of pupils from 14 primary schools were involved in the project. In the first two grades the experimental group was taught through their mother tongue (Hiligaynon) as the medium of instruction and thereafter up to Grade 6 in a second language (English). The control group was taught in English from their entry to primary school until Grade 6. In the experimental group there were initially 758 pupils from seven schools, and in the control group 1 164 pupils also from seven schools. Of these two groups of pupils in Grade 6 only 28 % were still involved in the experiment.

The study material for the two groups was identical, except in one respect, namely that the study material used in Grades 1 and 2 for the experimental group was translated from English to Hiligaynon. New methods were used to provide effective instruction in the second language, and teachers were trained to use Hiligaynon as medium and to teach English as the second language. In each grade both groups were subjected, *inter alia*, to reading, Arithmetic, Social Studies and language tests. These tests were written through the medium of the language in which the particular subject was taught.

At the end of the second year it was reported that Hiligaynon (the pupil's mother tongue), was a far more effective medium of instruction than English in the first two years of primary school. At the end of the third year, that is, after the experimental group had changed to English as the language medium, it was reported that the achievements of the experimental group still surpassed those of the control group, and also that there was no difference between the two groups' reading or language usage. At the end of the fourth year,

the experimental group performed slightly better than the control group, except in languages, and at the end of the sixth year, there was almost no difference between the two groups' academic achievements.

During the experiment, data were also collected on the personal and social adjustment of both groups. According to the data, the experimental group was better adjusted, personally and socially, than the control group. The finding at the end of Grade 6 was that pupils in the experimental group were more domineering, emotionally stable and emotionally and socially more mature than the control group pupils.

It was as a result of these findings that the government decided that from 1957 onwards Philippine pupils would be taught through the medium of their mother tongue in the first two grades of primary school.

7.5.3 Experiments on additional factors relating to the medium of instruction

(1) Ghana (Helm 1979: 91-94)

In 1970 Hawkes subjected a number of Ghanaian pupils to a language test (including syntax and vocabulary). The aim of the experiment was to establish whether pupils, who were exposed to English as the medium of instruction from their first or second school year, were more competent in English at the end of the primary school course than pupils who only had English as a subject. The assumption was that both groups used the same textbooks for English as a subject.

The situation in Ghanaian primary schools at that stage offered an outstanding opportunity for conducting the experiment because the schools changed to English as the language medium at different stages. Hawkes chose 433 pupils from two types of schools in which the transition to English as the medium of instruction occurred in Grade 1 and Grade 2 (English Medium Early type) and schools in which the change-over to English as the medium of instruction occurred after Grade 5 or not at all (English Medium Late type). In both these types of schools English was offered as a subject. In the English Medium Late schools teachers were often inclined, in teaching English, to use one of the Ghanaian languages (pupils' mother tongue), and also in the presentation of other school subjects to introduce the lesson through the medium of a Ghanaian language. In screening the schools from which pupils were subsequently chosen, cognisance was taken, *inter alia*, of the qualifications of teachers and the school textbooks used. Data were collected, *inter alia*, on each pupil's school history, domestic background, general and non-verbal ability.

Hawkes (Helm 1979: 91-94) found that pupils of English Medium Early schools had a better knowledge of English than pupils of the English Medium Late schools. The difference, however, was relatively slight. Another finding was that pupils whose domestic background was unfavourable for the acquisition of English, fared better in English in

the English Medium Early schools than their counterparts in the English Medium Late schools. Pupils with a domestic background which was extremely favourable for the acquisition of English fared equally well in both types of schools. The conclusion drawn in this experiment was that use of a second language as the medium of instruction does not necessarily improve pupils' knowledge of this language.

(2) Uganda (Helm 1979: 94-97)

In 1975 a report was compiled on an experiment conducted in Uganda, with a view to establishing what effect English as the medium of instruction and the starting stage of reading in English has on the linguistic achievements of primary school pupils who are not English speaking.

One thousand five hundred and sixty Grade 7 pupils from 58 schools who were on the point of leaving primary school were asked a number of questions about their domestic and educational background. They were asked, *inter alia*, if they were taught through the medium of English in Grade 1, when they had started learning English as a language or as a subject, what schools they had visited and where they lived. They were then subjected to reading tests in English and in their mother tongue.

Different groups of pupils, for instance those who had performed exceptionally well and those who had done very badly, were then compared and the researchers tried to find a correlation between the group's achievements in respect of each of the variables. It was found, *inter alia*, that there was no significant correlation between the use of English as the language medium in Grade 1 and the achievements of pupils in the English reading tests, and that pupils in urban areas performed better in English than pupils in rural areas. These findings were attributed to the fact that not one of the rural pupils who participated in the experiment, was taught through the medium of English in Grade 1, and to the fact that the teachers in the urban areas were better qualified than those in the rural areas.

A questionnaire was used to collect biographical data on the teachers attached to the schools at which the pupils were subjected to the tests. The teachers were asked, *inter alia*, to supply information about their training, teaching experience, the number of special courses that they had taken in English and the period that they had been attached to the relevant schools. The six schools at which pupils fared the best, were compared to the six schools in which the pupils fared the worst The finding was that in the schools where pupils performed best, there were more teachers with high qualifications compared to the schools where pupils performed the worst.

The study therefore showed that there is a more significant correlation between pupils' achievements in English and the qualifications of teachers, than between the pupils' achievements in English and the early introduction to English as subject and as the medium of instruction.

(3) KwaZulu

(a) University of Zululand

The research by the University of Zululand was undertaken to investigate the two following problems:

(i) The high failure rates in the schools under the jurisdiction of the Department of Training and Culture in KwaZulu. (Only 4,7 % of the pupils who began school in 1971 completed their senior certificate in 1983.)

(ii) The high percentage of failures in matric. (In 1983 only 4,8 % of the matric candidates passed.)

In the KwaZulu schools there is a change in Standard 3 from Zulu to English as the medium of instruction. It has been alleged that the pupils' poor proficiency in English handicaps them. The research was aimed at the situation in primary and secondary schools. Questionnaires regarding the language situation in primary schools were completed by primary school teachers. Student teachers who had already done their practice teaching were asked to give their impressions of the language situation in the classroom. The findings were as follows (Nel 1986: 1-34):

(i) Fifty-two per cent of the primary school teachers said that English was seldom used as the medium of instruction in primary schools, since the pupils had difficulty in understanding English.

(ii) Sixty-nine per cent of the primary school teachers said that English was used very seldom by primary school teachers in the classroom situation and during extramural activities. The reason given for this phenomenon by primary school teachers was that the teachers were not proficient enough in English.

(iii) According to 83,3 % of the teachers, pupils hear and use English only at school. Members of the community would like the pupils to master English, but do not offer any support by using English themselves.

(iv) In Standard 6 and 7 it is still customary to teach through the medium of Zulu.

(v) It appears that pupils in Standard 8 understand English better and that English is used more often as the medium of instruction. (Concepts are explained in English, but Zulu words and phrases are used if necessary.)

(vi) In Standards 9 and 10 English is consistently used as the medium of instruction. Teachers maintain that their pupils are able to follow the lessons in English without any problem.

In the light of these findings, it was concluded that there was no effective transition from Zulu to English as the medium of instruction in the primary school. A true change-over took place only after Standard 8 (Nel 1986: 1-34). The poor performance of pupils

can possibly be ascribed to the situation regarding the medium of instruction in the schools.

(b) The University of Stellenbosch (Odendaal 1986: 59-80)

The Institute for Language Teaching at the University of Stellenbosch conducted research in senior primary schools in KwaZulu, investigating the following problems experienced in the senior primary school phase:

(i) The quality and level of training that the teachers had received.

(ii) Factors that influenced teaching and learning.

(iii) The developmental level of pupils and their educational needs.

The investigation involved 6 186 senior primary teachers. The data were collected by means of interviews, questionnaires, a language proficiency test for teachers, and essays written by the teachers.

In the schools investigations were conducted into matters relating to the medium of instruction. As already mentioned, English is the official medium of instruction in KwaZulu schools from Standard 3. English is taught as a subject from Substandard B. No measurement of the Standard 3 pupils' proficiency in English was available, but pupils addressed were unable to understand questions such as "Where is your home?" or "Have you come far?". Among the teachers, 81,6 % indicated that Standard 3 pupils could not understand the textbooks without help. In the questionnaires 86,5 % of the teachers admitted that they taught the subject matter in the mother tongue. It was also found that 7,8 % of the teachers admitted that they used the mother tongue as the medium of instruction since they themselves were unable to use even simple English in the teaching situation. As far as the pupils' proficiency in English was concerned, 65,8 % of the teachers indicated that the pupils could not understand the Science textbooks written in English, and 62,5 % and 60,4 % respectively that the pupils could not understand the Geography and History textbooks written in English. The inspectors confirmed the teachers' claim and gave the following reasons for the teachers' use of the pupils' mother tongue instead of English (Odendaal 1986: 79):

(i) Pupils do not understand English.

(ii) The teachers' command of English is inadequate.

(iii) Pupils have difficulty with the change-over from the mother tongue to English.

(iv) Teachers have no facilities for improving their own proficiency in English.

In order to improve the above situation Odendaal (1986: 80) recommends the following:

* Instruction in the mother tongue.

* The addition of an extra year to enable pupils to master the medium (English).

* Accelerated language instruction courses for both pupils and teachers to enable them to master English.

7.6 CONCLUSION

The proposals in respect of the stage at which one can change over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction vary from the second and fourth school year to the start of the secondary school, since the mother tongue is considered to be the desirable medium for teaching in the primary school.

With regard to the manner of change-over, there is gradual change-over, subject-related change-over, the joint use of the mother tongue and the foreign language for instruction, and the immediate change-over to the foreign language as the medium of instruction for all subjects.

Experiments regarding the change to a foreign medium of instruction showed that -

(i) greater opportunities for exposure to a foreign language promote the learning of that language,

(ii) the number of years that pupils have been exposed to the foreign language as the medium of instruction promotes their learning of that language,

(iii) regardless of the stage at which the change-over to the foreign language as the medium of instruction is made, pupils achieve the same level of language proficiency at the end of their primary school career,

(iv) pupils who are taught through the medium of their mother tongue for the first six years of primary school, perform better than pupils who have had mother tongue instruction for the first three years only,

(v) well-qualified (trained) teachers ensure good pupil performance and language acquisition,

(vi) the experimental group who received mother tongue instruction during the first two school years and then foreign language instruction, were better adjusted than the group who received foreign language instruction from their first school year,

(vii) exposure to a foreign language in the family context promotes acquisition of that language.

(viii) The transition to a foreign language in the practical situation takes place much later than the language policy determines. (The reasons that are given for this phenomenon, is that the pupils cannot understand the foreign language and that the teachers' mastery of the language is insufficient.)

The findings on the stage at which a foreign language should be introduced as the medium of instruction and the method used, are divergent.

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (SECOND LANGUAGE) AS A SUBJECT AT SCHOOL

8.1 METHOD OF INTRODUCTION

The stage at which a second or foreign language should be included in the school curriculum, depends largely on the way in which the language is introduced. Two points are relevant when it comes to method of introduction, namely

* the order in which literacy is acquired in the mother tongue and in the foreign language, and

* the order in which different language proficiency components, that is, speaking, writing and reading are taught to pupils.

8.1.1 The order of literacy

On the whole, there is consensus in the literature on this question. The idea is that pupils should first attain literacy in the mother tongue and then in the foreign language. "This goal (*to learn to think and speak and read in the second language) we believe, is psychologically and pedagogically as a rule best achieved by two short jumps (that is, from illiteracy to literacy in the mother tongue, and from literacy in the mother tongue to literacy in a second language) than by one long jump (that is, from illiteracy in the mother tongue to literacy in a second language)" (Unesco 1953: 55-56). Wilkens (1977: 13) recommends that a child should try to master the two language skills of reading and writing in a foreign language only after he has learnt to read and write in his mother tongue. Gorman (1970: 61) says the following of the child's acquisition of reading skill: "He should not be asked to break two written codes at one time: i.e. if he is learning to read through the medium of his mother tongue, he should not at the same time have to learn to read English."

Fishman (1984: 52) however, holds that the order in which a child should learn his mother tongue and a foreign language, depends on his domestic and social circumstances. A pupil who goes to school for the first time from a home and community in which literacy is general and a top priority, is ready for it, not only in the first language, but also in the second. In contrast, a child who is totally unprepared for literacy (usually someone from a culturally backward community) must first fully internalise his mother tongue before he can tackle a second language. The AGN Report (1982: 63) also subscribes to the principle that the basic skills of reading and simple writing should first be mastered in one language before starting in the next language. Simultaneous or overlapping acquisition of these skills in more than one language must necessarily have a detrimental effect on the quality and rate of mastery. According

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* Own insertion in brackets.

to the report, the consequence of such overlapping is a low standard of reading and writing in both the mother tongue and foreign language or languages. The fact that letters and letter combinations symbolise completely different phonetic values in different languages, may confuse pupils. This confusion may be even greater if the reading methods of the languages do not correlate.

8.1.2 The sequence of acquisition of language components

Malefo (1982: 2) quotes Stern on the sequence of acquisition of language components as follows: " ... listening and comprehension came before utterance in the first language, therefore it is thought that in second language learning, listening should also precede speaking and both should come before reading and writing, or it is noted that rational or abstract logical learning cannot be imposed on the child when he learns his first language, consequently it should not be imposed either for second language learning in early years". The view of Hawes (1979: 77) corresponds to that of Stern, but he adds that learning to read in a language in which the spoken word is not properly understood could lead to a pretence reading and writing knowledge (pseudo-literacy).

8.1.3 The stage of introduction

There are different views on the stage at which a second language should be introduced in the school curriculum. Hughes (Krüger 1976: 86) maintains that the best time to start second language instruction is when a pupil is eight years old because at that stage his vocabulary goes from strength to strength. According to Houmouni (1968: 125) a European foreign language should not be included in the curriculum as a subject before the first three years of primary school because a pupil of nine or ten, who can already read and write his mother tongue, is in a better position to quickly acquire a new language. Such a child's intellectual capacity has already developed considerably because of his age and the instruction he has already received.

The following educationists and organisations relate their recommendations on the introduction of the second language as the medium of instruction to the transition from the mother tongue to the second language as medium:

* Unesco (1953: 55-56) maintains that it is wise to bring a primary school pupil into contact with a second language as early as his first or second school year. By learning the language spoken to them, children become familiar with the articulation of and certain phrases in the second language. The time spent on the use of the language can gradually be increased and later it can be taught as a subject. When the pupils understand the language well enough, if necessary it can be used as the medium of instruction in certain subjects. In secondary school the second language can be used as the only medium of instruction if there is a shortage of textbooks in the mother tongue.

* Wilkens (1977: 13) refers to a method of introduction which was successful in Montreal and Brussels. The second language is introduced early in the primary school phase as a subject in the

the curriculum on a regular basis for 45 minutes a day. The language is then used increasingly as the medium of instruction up to secondary school level - first for visual and later for conceptual subjects as well.

* According to Duminy (1974: 465) one cannot start oral work too early in the foreign medium. He goes on to say that these oral periods should lead to the introduction of the foreign language as a fully-fledged subject. When pupils' second language proficiency is such that they can be taught through the medium of the second language, the foreign language can be introduced increasingly as the medium of instruction, on the understanding that it is didactically acceptable to sometimes still use the mother tongue to explain subject matter if necessary.

* After their study of education in SWA/Namibia, the AGN Committee (AGN Report 1982: 61-62) put forward certain proposals on the introduction of languages in primary school. The committee made two proposals for triple medium primary schools in SWA/Namibia which are elucidated in Tables 8.1 and 8.2.

The first proposal explained in Table 8.1 is in accordance with the educational principle already discussed, namely that the basic skills of reading and writing should first be acquired in the mother tongue before starting to teach the second language. Proposal two (Table 8.2) violates this basic principle in that pupils start reading in the second and third language two terms earlier. Hence there is slight overlapping in the various reading programmes. Proposal two, however, is recommended with reservations in the AGN Report. The following proposals are made in respect of dual medium primary schools: For English medium and Afrikaans medium schools, the pattern of introduction for the first two languages applies, as put forward in Proposal one (Table 8.1). In schools with pupils who are not English- or Afrikaans-speaking, but who also do not use their mother tongue as the medium of instruction, the different components of the two official languages should not in any event be introduced earlier than determined in Proposal one (Table 8.1) in respect of the first two languages. According to the AGN Report, one should sooner consider introducing it more sporadically, especially with a view to having a longer period of exposure to the foreign language in the first school year. One consideration would be to use the whole Substandard A year for oral work and random reading and to start the second language in Standard 2 instead of Standard 1.

As far as the stage of introduction of the second and the third language (foreign languages) is concerned, the following two criteria should apply to determine the stage of introduction:

* The aim of instruction in the second language. Is it to be used only for oral communication as a subject or as a medium of instruction? (Mostert 1983: 3; Mackey 1984: 48; Krüger 1976: 88.) According to the RGN Report "Tale en Taalonderrig" (1981: 50) a future medium of instruction should be taught as a subject at an early stage.

* The desired level of proficiency at the end of the child's school career (Mostert 1983: 3; Krüger 1976: 88).

TABLE 8.1

PROPOSED STAGES OF LANGUAGE INTRODUCTION IN THREE LANGUAGE PRIMARY SCHOOLS: PROPOSAL ONE

O = ORAL R = READING W = WRITING

STANDARD	TERM	MOTHER TONGUE (First Language)			AFRIKAANS/ENGLISH (Second Language)			AFRIKAANS/ENGLISH (Third Language)		
		O	R	W	O	R	W	O	R	W
SUB. A	1	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
	4	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
SUB. B	1	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
	2	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
	3	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
	4	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
STD 1	1	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	-
	2	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	-
	3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
	4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
STD 2	1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
	2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
	3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
	4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
STD 3	1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
STD 4	1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
STD 5	TRANSITION FROM AFRIKAANS TO ENGLISH AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION									

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TABLE 8.2

PROPOSED STAGES OF LANGUAGE INTRODUCTION IN THREE LANGUAGE PRIMARY SCHOOLS: PROPOSAL TWO

O = ORAL R = READING W = WRITING

STANDARD	TERM	MOTHER TONGUE (First Language)			AFRIKAANS/ENGLISH (Second Language)			AFRIKAANS/ENGLISH (Third Language)		
		O	R	W	O	R	W	O	R	W
SUB. A	1	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
	4	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
SUB. B	1	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
	2	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
	3	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-
	4	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	-
STD 1	1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
	2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
	3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
	4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
STD 2	1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
	2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
	3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
STD 3	1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
STD 4	1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
STD 5	TRANSITION FROM AFRIKAANS TO ENGLISH AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION									

8.1.4 Arguments in favour of an early introduction of the foreign language as a subject

* According to Hostert (1983: 1) the majority of authors and researchers maintain that the earlier a pupil starts second or foreign language instruction in his school career, the higher the level of proficiency that can be attained. If one starts early with second or foreign language instruction, there is a longer period and consequently pupils have more time for the functional use of the second language or foreign language.

* A child who acquires a second language at a very early stage is less handicapped by inhibitions and psychological blocks with regard to use of the second language compared to a child who only learns it later (Krüger 1976: 84).

* Penfield (Krüger 1976: 84) states that it becomes difficult for a child to acquire a second or foreign language by approximately the fourteenth year. He recommends that pupils start acquiring a second language, as the medium of instruction, between the fourth and tenth year.

* According to Vildomec (Krüger 1976: 84) younger children acquire a foreign language more quickly, but forget it just as quickly later on. He cites the case of a seven-year-old child who acquired a foreign language within seven months, but started experiencing serious articulation problems in his mother tongue. A logical outcome is that if pupils start learning a language at too early an age, the process should be kept up, otherwise the second or foreign language will be forgotten just as quickly. It has also been shown, however, that a language that is acquired and forgotten is subsequently acquired more quickly than one that is learned for the first time at a later stage.

8.1.5 Arguments in favour of introduction at a later stage

* Some educationists maintain that a second or foreign language should preferably be introduced later on in the school curriculum, since greater cognitive development and learning experience benefit older children (Hostert 1983: 1).

* The critical disposition of the secondary school pupil enables him to learn a second language more quickly than the less developed primary school child (Krüger 1976: 84).

* A serious consideration is the possibility that a too early introduction to a foreign language not only harms his intellectual, linguistic and even mental life, but there are also cases of bilingual infants who tend "to think without words" (Krüger 1976: 84).

* The speech concepts of a child who has to keep up with two languages from an early age are poor. He is also inclined to transfer striking descriptions and easier inflections from one language to another which sometimes causes language contamination (Krüger 1976: 84).

8.2 HYPOTHESES REGARDING THE STAGE AT WHICH A SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE SHOULD BE INTRODUCED

8.2.1 The critical period hypothesis (Nijsse 1980: 6-11; Andersson 1960: 298-306; Van der Walt 1983: 36;; Krashen 1981: 77)

According to this hypothesis or theory, the critical period for language acquisition is regarded as the period between about two years of age and puberty. Prior to the age of two, language acquisition is generally impossible because of physiological maturational factors. After puberty and the accompanying lateralisation of brain functions, language acquisition no longer occurs naturally and spontaneously. Wilder Penfield and Eric Lenneberg were the chief exponents of this theory.

(1) Wilder Penfield's view on the critical period hypothesis

In a discussion of language acquisition from a psychological perspective, Penfield remarked that there is a striking number of anecdotal and impressionistic proofs that before the age of nine, children acquire a language easily. After this age language acquisition seems to be more difficult, and a child's ability to acquire language seems to be rigid. He claims that this behavioural proof has a psychological base, namely that a child's brain has a plasticity, whereas an adult's brain is rigid.

(2) Eric Lenneberg's view on the critical period hypothesis

According to Lenneberg, natural language acquisition can occur through exposure to language only during the critical period which he puts between two years of age and puberty. He does not deny that older children and adults can learn foreign languages, but maintains that natural acquisition of a second language through exposure to it largely disappears after puberty, and that after this critical age the problem of an accent cannot be overcome. He adds that language acquisition blockage increases rapidly after puberty. Lenneberg holds that before puberty, a child's brain has a plasticity with regard to language, which an adult's brain has already lost. The reason for this is that before puberty the human brain is not completely lateralised in respect of language functions.

(3) Elaboration of the critical period hypothesis

Various researchers and authors supported the theory but took the age of ten as the dividing line. Prior to this age, the speech habits in the mother tongue are not so deeply engrained as to handicap the acquisition of a second language. Andersson (1960: 298-306) concluded that the optimum age to start learning a second language is between four and eight, with the expectation of a better command between the ages of eight and ten. The conclusion drawn by a large group of researchers is that to speak a second language with self-confidence and an acceptable accent, a pupil should not start learning the language later than the age of ten. This age can be regarded as the dividing line between conditioned learning, that is, learning through imitation and repetition as in the case of a small child, and learning through concept formation, in other words, learning logically through abstract thinking.

(4) Shortcomings in the critical period hypothesis

According to Nijsse (1980: 9-11) this theory has been criticised on a number of scores. The view has been expressed that Penfield, Lenneberg and their followers based their views on theoretical reasoning rather than on direct observation. They have no experimental proof for their conclusions. Researchers such as Carroll, Burstall, Smythe, Oller, Stern and others, generally found that older children are more successful with second language acquisition than younger children if they have the same amount of exposure to the language. Research with school children generally showed that Grade 5 pupils (about ten years of age) are the most successful with second language acquisition. The latest research shows that the process of lateralisation is already completed at the age of 5 or even earlier (Van der Walt 1983: 36). The reasons for the evident decline of the ability of the child in puberty to learn a second language can be stated as the formal operational phase in which the child finds himself. At this stage affective changes take place in the child because he becomes more self-conscious and aware of other people's thoughts about him. He often feels that other people focus on his shortcomings and this leads to a negative attitude that stands in the way of learning a second language (Krashen 1981: 77).

8.2.2 The development-interdependence hypothesis (Cummins 1978: 405-408)

According to this hypothesis the level of second language proficiency that a bilingual child attains is a function of the level of his first language skill at the stage when intensive exposure to the second language starts. When the first language is well-developed and reinforced by the child's domestic environment, as in the case of the majority of middle-class English-speaking children in the North American immersion programme, it is highly probable that intensive exposure to the second language will result in a high level of second language skill. In these circumstances intensive exposure to the second language will not have a detrimental effect on the first language. The initial high level of first language proficiency makes possible development of similar levels of skill in the second language. When the first language is poorly developed, however, as in the case of socio-economically disadvantaged children, intensive exposure to the second language can handicap continued development of first language skills. The fact that these first language skills remain poorly developed, will limit development of the second language.

As empirical support for the development-interdependence hypothesis, Cummins (1978: 406) refers to the Unesco Report of Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa's study of Finnish migrant children. The aim of the study was to determine the linguistic level and development in both the mother tongue and Swedish of Finnish migrant children who attended Swedish medium schools. Special note was taken of the interdependence between skills in the mother tongue and in Swedish, that is, the hypothesis that those who retain their mother tongue the best, also perform optimally in Swedish. The findings strongly supported the hypothesis. The extent to which the mother tongue was developed prior to contact with Swedish, showed a strong correlation with the level of skill in Swedish. Children who migrated at the

age of ten, retained a level of language proficiency which was on a par with Finnish students in Finland, and attained skills in Swedish which were comparable to those of the Swedes. One of the findings was that mother tongue development was especially significant for school subjects which require abstract mental capacity. Another finding was that Finnish in the higher standards was more important for achievement in Mathematics compared with Swedish, although Mathematics is taught in Swedish. This finding supports the concept that the abstract level of the mother tongue is important for mastering conceptual tasks related to Mathematics. Subjects such as Biology, Chemistry and Physics also require conceptual thinking, and it was found that in these subjects pupils with a good level of proficiency in their mother tongue fared considerably better than those who had a poor command of their mother tongue.

Futher proof of the development-interdependence hypothesis is a study conducted by Leslie (Cummins 1978: 407) with Grade 1 and 2 pupils of the Hobbema Cree Indian Reserve in Alberta. He found a high correlation between children's oral Cree and English reading skills.

Herbert *et al.* (Cummins 1978: 407) found in a study of the academic performance of minority French-speaking children in Manitoba that the percentage of teaching time in French (first language) had no effect on achievement in English, but that it did in fact influence achievement in French. In other words, pupils' progress in their first language led to higher levels of first language skill, with no adverse effect on the second language. Ramirez and Politzer's (Cummins 1978: 407) study of Spanish-speaking children and their skills in English, showed that home use of Spanish led to a higher level of skill in Spanish, with no detrimental effect on their performance in English. In contrast, use of English at home led to a decline of proficiency in Spanish with no improvement in English. In both studies, a loss of first language proficiency did not result in an increase in second language skill, in spite of increasing interaction by means of the second language. In terms of the development-interdependence hypothesis, one can conclude that the positive effects of maintaining the first language on the second language, compensates for the fact that less time is spent on the second language.

8.3 EXPERIMENTS CONCERNING THE STAGE OF INTRODUCING THE SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS A SUBJECT

8.3.1 The British Primary French Scheme (Nijsse 1980: 15-16)

In 1963-64 the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) launched an experiment in England and Wales which was to take ten years. The Department of Education and Science in England and Wales, the Schools Council, local education authorities and the Nuffield Foundation all participated in the experiment. The primary aim was to establish whether or not it is feasible and educationally justifiable to introduce French as a foreign language at the age of eight as against the customary eleven years of age.

In England and Wales 125 primary schools from 15 selected areas were

involved in the experiment. At these schools French was taught as a foreign language to eight-year-old pupils, and tuition continued to the end of secondary school. These selected schools were widely scattered geographically so that large urban schools and small rural ones could be included in the experiment. The only criterion for inclusion in one of the three experimental groups was the pupils' date of birth.

The first experimental group comprised all the pupils in the large primary schools included in the project in the age group eight years to eight years and eleven months on 1 September 1964, as well as all the pupils in the small primary schools in the age group eight years to nine years and eleven months on 1 September 1964. This produced an experimental group of about 5 700 pupils.

The second experimental group was composed of all pupils in all large primary schools in the age group eight years to eight years and eleven months on 1 September 1965. This second experimental group consisted of approximately 5 300 pupils. Later a third group was formed. This included all pupils in the large schools in the age group eight years to eight years and eleven months on 1 September 1968, and pupils in the small schools in the age group eight years to nine years and eleven months. This group numbered about 6 000 pupils.

The experimental groups were compared to two control groups. One control group consisted of children of the same age group as the experimental group, but who had started French at the age of eleven - thus two years later. The other control group consisted of children who were older than the experimental group, but had received instruction in French for the same number of years. Groups 1 and 3 were studied for five years (from eight to thirteen years of age) - three years in primary school and two years in secondary school. Group 2 was studied for the longest period (from eight to sixteen years of age) - three years in primary school and five years in secondary school.

The findings of the study in respect of the age for commencing instruction in French were as follows:

(i) When the experimental groups (at the age of thirteen, that is, after five years of French instruction) were compared to the control groups of the same age (but with three years less French instruction), it was found that the former fared better in all areas.

(ii) When the experimental groups (at the age of thirteen) were compared to the control group who had had the same number of years instruction in French, but were two years older, it was found that the control group fared better in all fields in respect of French.

(iii) At the age of sixteen, after the experimental groups had already had eight years of instruction in French as against the ordinary sixteen-year-old pupils who had only had five years of instruction, it was found that the experimental group fared better in respect of listening and reading skills, but there were no significant differences in speaking and writing skills.

According to Nijsse (1980: 15-16), Clare Burstall (senior researcher at the NFER) drew the following conclusion: "Thus the most conservative interpretation which the available evidence would appear to permit, is that the achievement of skill in a foreign language is primarily a function of the amount of time spent studying that language, but is also affected by the age of the learner, older pupils tending to be more efficient than younger ones. Penfield's contention that the first ten years of life constitute a 'critical period' for foreign language acquisition remains unsupported by direct experimental evidence"; and "Now that the results of the evaluation are finally available ... it is hard to resist the conclusion that the weight of the evidence has combined with the balance of opinion to tip the scale against a possible expansion of the teaching of French in primary schools."

8.3.2 Frühbeginn des Englischunterrichts (FEU) (Nijsse 1980: 16-18)

In the Federal Republic of West Germany, English is usually presented from the fifth school year (ten to eleven years of age) up to the end of the child's school career at the age of fifteen, sixteen or nineteen, depending on the type of school he attends. The contention was that the results were unsatisfactory and that positive steps should be taken to improve the proficiency level of English as second language. More periods per week and better organisation of instruction were not sufficient to improve results. The only practical solution was to start instruction at an earlier age, namely in the third year of school (about eight years of age). This possibility was studied empirically (from 1970 to 1975) in two schools in Lower Saxony under the control and administration of the Education Department of Lower Saxony.

In 1970 a project was started to teach English as second language to all eight-year-olds in a specific area in the towns of Braunshweig, Salzgitter and Wolfsburg, as well as a few neighbouring villages. Provision was also made for continuity between primary and secondary school, since pupils' progress would be studied for five years - for two years in primary school and three years in secondary school. One thousand two hundred pupils in 36 classes of 12 schools were included. The teachers in the primary schools involved in the project, were virtually all qualified for primary school education and specialised in the instruction of English as a subject. The instruction was divided as follows:

(i) In the third school year, English was presented for 20 minutes on five days a week.

(ii) In the fourth school year English was presented for twenty minutes for four days a week and for 45 minutes on the fifth day, and in the fifth, sixth and seventh school years for 45 minutes on four days of the week.

Researchers and teachers worked closely together and there was strict co-ordination in the instruction at the twelve schools. At the end of each year, achievement in skills was evaluated up to that stage: listening and speaking skills in the third school year and listening, speaking and reading skills in the fifth, sixth and

seventh school years. At the end of the fifth school year, the performance of the experimental group was compared with the achievement of an intellectually and socially comparable group who had started instruction in English at the "normal" age of ten to eleven years.

The results of the FEU Project (Doyé 1979: 29-34) were as follows:

(i) At the end of the fifth, sixth and seventh school years the experimental group fared better than the control group in all four skills in the foreign language (English). The difference was most marked in the fifth school year and declined slightly in the sixth and seventh school years. There was still, however, a significant difference in all four skills.

(ii) The early start did not influence pupils' performance in the mother tongue and other subjects.

(iii) At the end of the experiment 74 % of the experimental group and 81 % of their parents were in favour of starting English instruction earlier.

(iv) Of the teachers in the experimental group and the control group, 94 % and 67 % respectively were in favour of an earlier start in English instruction.

According to Nijsse (1980: 18), the contradiction between the results of the British Primary French Scheme and the FEU Project may be ascribed to the following factors:

(i) In the project in West Germany the majority of the teachers in primary school were qualified in primary school education and second language instruction, while in the project in England a large percentage of the teachers in primary school failed to satisfy both of the qualification requirements.

(ii) In the project in West Germany, continuity between primary and secondary school was ensured, while in the English project this was not so.

(iii) The difference in magnitude between the two projects was a significant factor. The relatively small number of schools involved in the project in West Germany made possible regular consultations and co-ordination between researchers and teachers. This was not possible in the project in England, because of its magnitude.

8.3.3 The IEA Research Programme (Nijsse 1980: 18-22)

In 1965 the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) started an international research programme to evaluate pupil performance in six selected school subjects which included English and French as a second language.

(a) **The Teaching of French as a Foreign Language in Eight Countries** (Nijsse 1980: 17-21)

Chile, England (and Wales), the Netherlands, New Zealand, Romania, Scotland, Sweden and the USA were the eight countries involved in the project. A total of 30 000 pupils were included. An international committee for French as a foreign language was appointed, its task being to study the French instructional programmes of participating countries. The committee found that the countries involved generally used the same programmes and emphasised the same objectives in respect of the basic skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. It was therefore possible to compile proficiency tests which could be used for all the test groups to assess their performance in French.

Three age groups were to be studied, a ten-year-old, a fourteen-year-old and a pre-university age group. Variables considered for the evaluation of achievement in French included starting age, number of years of French instruction, number of periods per week presented in French, method of instruction, skill of teachers and motivation of pupils.

The research findings revealed the following:

(i) Success in the second or foreign language depends on the amount of time (number of years) devoted to teaching it.

(ii) The teacher's skill in the use of the foreign language influences pupils' performance.

(iii) The extent to which the foreign language (French) is used in the classroom as against the mother tongue led to better results in the foreign language.

(iv) If pupils are motivated to acquire the foreign language, they tend to perform better.

The conclusions drawn on the basis of the research are as follows:

(i) The average child in an academic programme should receive four to five hours foreign language instruction per week during the school year to achieve a "reasonable standard" in the use of the foreign language in six to seven years.

(ii) In favourable teaching circumstances (careful planning of the foreign language programme, special teaching methods and the teacher's proficiency in the foreign language) and if pupils are properly motivated, the years of instruction can be reduced and the same standard maintained.

(iii) Language planners should establish what they regard as a "reasonable standard" (in other words, their objectives in teaching the foreign language) and then decide how much time (how many years) the majority of pupils need to achieve that standard.

(b) The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Ten Countries (Nijsse 1980: 21-22)

Belgium, Chile, West Germany, Finland, Hungary, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and Thailand were involved in this project.

The methods used were the same as those in the previous project, i.e. "The Teaching of French as a Foreign Language in Eight Countries." The findings of the project coincide with those of the project on the teaching of French. The findings were as follows (Lewis & Massad 1975: 17, 33-38, 297):

(i) Success in mastering the foreign language is determined by the number of years of instruction in the language.

(ii) The teacher's skill in use of the foreign language as a spoken language and as a medium of instruction influences pupils' performance.

(iii) The fact that more time was spent on use of the foreign language instead of the mother tongue in the classroom yielded better results in respect of acquisition of skill in the foreign language.

(iv) Motivation and expectations among pupils lead to successful acquisition of the language.

8.3.4 The Uganda Experiment (see Paragraph 3.2.1)

In the Uganda Experiment discussed earlier, it was found that there is a more significant correlation between pupils' performance in English (the foreign language) and the teachers' qualifications than pupils' performance in English and early acquaintance with the language as a subject. (Proper training of teachers in English and in the instruction of English is a prerequisite for successful use of the language as the medium of instruction. This applies to instruction in any foreign language (Bamgbose 1976: 21).

8.4 EXPERIMENTS ON THE METHOD OF INTRODUCING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS A SUBJECT

8.4.1 The Iloilo Experiment II (Helm 1979: 82-86)

An experiment was launched on the Philippine Islands in 1957 to instruct Philippine pupils in the first two grades of primary school through the medium of the national language (Filipino, also known as Tagalog). English was presented in these two grades as a subject and from Grade 3 onwards as the medium in the place of Filipino. This subject was taught throughout primary school as a subject. Since a large percentage of the population did not have a command of English or Filipino, some pupils were forced from Grade 1 to learn two foreign languages. To determine the soundness of this policy, the Iloilo Experiment was conducted from 1961 to 1964.

Three groups of Hiligaynon-speaking pupils from 21 schools were included in the experiment. Initially, each group had 300 pupils. All three groups were taught through the medium of their mother tongue in Grades 1 and 2 and through the medium of English in Grade 3. As far as instruction in Filipino and English as subjects was concerned, each group followed a different scheme in Grades 1 and 2. Group 1 learned Filipino and English in both grades. Group 2 learned English in Grades 1 and 2 and Filipino in Grade 2. Group 3 learned Filipino in Grades 1 and 2 and English in Grade 2.

TABLE 8.3

THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AND LANGUAGE SUBJECTS FROM GRADES 1 TO 3 (PHILIPPINE ISLANDS) (Helm 1979: 84)

Groups and languages		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Group 1	Medium	Mother tongue	Mother tongue	English
	Language subjects	English Filipino	English Filipino	
Group 2	Medium	Mother tongue	Mother tongue	English
	Language subjects	English	English Filipino	
Group 3	Medium	Mother tongue	Mother tongue	English
	Language subjects	Filipino	Filipino English	

Language tests to which the groups were subjected at the end of Grades 2 and 3 showed, *inter alia*, that when children whose mother tongue is Hiligaynon in Grades 1, 2 and 3 are taught both Filipino and English as foreign languages, it is best to start both languages in Grade 1. Another finding was that if two foreign languages are taught simultaneously but during different teaching periods, acquisition of the one language hardly impairs the other language if the two are different - say English and Filipino. To determine what effect each of the language schemes had on pupils' learning performance in the non-language subjects (Social Study and Arithmetic), all three groups were tested in Grade 3. The tests were compiled in English and Hiligaynon and were also bilingual, with English and Hiligaynon alongside each other on the same page. The conclusion drawn was that pupils' performance at the end of Grade 3 in Social Study, Hygiene, Science and Arithmetic was not noticeably influenced by the scheme of second language study in Grades 1 and 2.

8.4.2 **The experiment of the Education Bureau of the Transvaal Education Department** (Krüger 1976: 74-93)

The Transvaal Education Bureau launched a study from 1971 to 1974 to examine the uncertainty in respect of the optimum time for starting reading and writing in the second language in primary school, as well as the influence of the second language on acquisition of the home language.

Both official languages of South Africa were included as second language in the experiment, that is, English as second language in Afrikaans-medium schools and Afrikaans as second language in English-medium schools. Initially 1 929 Afrikaans-speaking and 2 142 English-speaking pupils were involved in the experiment. For various reasons, such as failure and school leaving, however, over the years the number of pupils was drastically reduced.

The experimental schools started introducing reading and writing in the second language at different stages. The schools were first divided into groups of four each. Tables 8.4 and 8.5 show how the groups of schools were included in the experiment.

TABLE 8.4

STAGE AT WHICH READING AND WRITING SHOULD BE STARTED IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE (FIRST HALF OF GROUP)

School	Reading	Writing
A	July Grade 2 (1971)	January Std 1 (1972)
B	January Std 1 (1972)	July Std 1 (1972)
C	July Std 1 (1972)	January Std 2 (1973)
D	January Std 2 (1973)	July Std 2 (1973)

The other half of the groups started reading and writing simultaneously.

TABLE 8.5

STAGE AT WHICH READING AND WRITING SHOULD BE STARTED SIMULTANEOUSLY IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE (SECOND HALF OF GROUP)

School	Simultaneous reading and writing
E	July Grade 2 (1971)
F	January Std 1 (1972)
G	July Std 1 (1972)
H	January Std 2 (1973)

100

Evaluation was done on the basis of questionnaires and scholastic achievement tests. The pupils who participated in the final tests were subdivided (according to IQ) into five groups, so that the performance of pupils with high IQ's was not compared with that of pupils with lower IQ's.

One of the findings of the experiment was that the Afrikaans-speaking group which fared best in English as second language had started reading at the beginning of Standard 1 and had started writing six to seven months later. The English-speaking group that fared best in Afrikaans as second language had started reading and writing six months later than the other groups. The general finding was that the groups that had started reading and writing half a year or a year later than was customary fared better than the other groups.

On the basis of the results of the experiment it was recommended that -

(i) primary school pupils should start their second language instruction with comprehension and speaking, that reading should be started later and writing even later still;

(ii) reading should be introduced later than Standard 1, and

(iii) writing in the second language should only be introduced a year later than reading work.

8.4.3 The Rizal Experiment (see Paragraph 7.5.1(2)(a))

In the Rizal Experiment discussed earlier it was found that there is a very small difference in reading skill between pupils who start reading English (second language) in Grade 1 and pupils who start in Grade 2 (Holm 1979: 78-81).

8.5 CONCLUSION

The order in which a foreign language should be introduced as a subject, appears to be first listening and speaking (comprehension), then reading and finally writing. It is also important for pupils first to be able to speak, read and write satisfactorily in their mother tongue before a foreign language is introduced. Pupils in the first three years of school cannot simultaneously acquire speaking, reading and writing skills of two or more languages.

As far as the stage at which the foreign language should be introduced is concerned, early introduction (exposure to the foreign language during the first to sixth school year) and later introduction (exposure to the foreign language at the beginning of secondary school) are the two standpoints advocated. Although both of these methods have advantages and disadvantages, early introduction of a foreign language seems to be more popular.

Experiments conducted to determine at what stage a second language should be started, came to light with the following results:

(i) The period for which instruction in the foreign language was given, determines the success of language acquisition.

(ii) Pupils who start instruction in a foreign language in their third year of school, fare better in the language than pupils who start learning the language in their fifth year of school.

(iii) Teachers' competence in the foreign language and actual instruction in the language determine pupils' success in acquiring the language.

(iv) The amount of time spent on the usage of the language determines pupils' success in acquiring it. The more time spent on the language the greater is pupils' proficiency in it.

(v) Motivation and the expectations of pupils contribute to succesful acquisition of the language.

Early introduction of the foreign language (second language), from the third school year in fact, seems to promote acquisition of the language.

CHAPTER 9

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 ORIENTATION

The AGN Report Investigation into education in SWA/Namibia pointed out the following two problem areas in education:

(i) The unsatisfactory school readiness of children starting school which can affect their school career detrimentally.

(ii) The mother tongue/medium of instruction problem in education which lies at the root of the teaching and formative education problems experienced.

The problem of a medium of instruction in SWA/Namibia is complex, since deciding on a policy involves not only the mother tongues but also the official languages, English and Afrikaans.

In a one-language country it is accepted that the national language, which is the mother tongue, should be the medium of instruction at school. It is in a multilingual country in particular that the choice of a medium of instruction causes problems.

When the language or medium of instruction in the schools of the eleven education authorities in SWA/Namibia is considered, it appears that there are schools that have one language as the medium of instruction from Substandard A to Standard 10, while others have two at different educational stages. Depending on the number of languages that are taught at school, there are two-language and three-language primary schools. It also appears that in three-language schools two languages are taught from Substandard A and the third language from Substandard B.

In the schools of the Administration for Whites, the Administration for Coloureds and the Rehoboth Government the mother tongue (Afrikaans and/or English) is the medium of instruction up to Standard 10. In schools of the other education authorities the mother tongue (African language) is the medium of instruction up to Standard 1 or 2. English and Afrikaans are introduced as subjects in the first three school years, and one of the two becomes the medium of instruction from Standard 2.

It is evident that pupils are overburdened with languages, particularly in the first three years (Substandard A, Substandard B and Standard 1) and have only a limited acquaintance with or exposure to English and Afrikaans during those years with a view to acquiring adequate proficiency in these languages, one of which will become the future medium of instruction.

9.2 AIM AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

As far as this report is concerned, the aim of the investigation was to make an extensive study of the relevant literature regarding the language situation in developing countries - in particular in the

African countries - since these countries, like South West Africa/Namibia, also have to contend with problems relating to the mother tongue and foreign languages as the medium of instruction. In order to shed light on the issue of the language of instruction with which South West Africa/Namibia has to contend, a study was made of African countries, one Far Eastern country, and certain European countries of their policies regarding the medium of instruction, the change from the mother tongue to a foreign language as the medium of instruction, the incorporation of a foreign language as a school subject, the position of the mother tongue as a school subject, and of research into problems concerning the medium of instruction in multilingual countries.

9.3 FINDINGS

9.3.1 Findings regarding views on the medium of instruction in multilingual countries

When one looks at the viewpoints that favour the mother tongue or the foreign language as the medium of instruction, the following become evident:

(i) Supporters of the mother tongue consistently stress that the child's emotional and cognitive development (development of thought processes, conceptualization, perceptive learning) take place optimally when the mother tongue is the medium of instruction - particularly during the first three to four years of the child's school career. It is also claimed that instruction through the medium of the mother tongue enhances cultural preservation.

(ii) Supporters of the foreign language stress the economic advantages that a foreign language (an established, developed language, generally an international language) holds as a medium of instruction. A foreign language as the medium of instruction for all the population groups has implicit financial savings as far as textbook provision, the training of teachers and the development of the orthographies of the mother tongue(s) is concerned.

9.3.2 Findings of experiments conducted to determine the most effective medium of instruction

Experiments conducted into the most effective medium of teaching in multilingual countries showed that the mother tongue is the best medium of instruction. It was found that -

(i) pupils taught through the medium of their mother tongue performed better scholastically than pupils whose medium of instruction was a foreign language, and they also less often needed to repeat a school year than pupils whose medium of teaching was a foreign language,

(ii) pupils taught through the medium of a foreign language often had too poor a vocabulary in the foreign language to acquire insight into a subject, and

(iii) pupils taught through the medium of their mother tongue communicated more spontaneously in the classroom situation than pupils who received instruction through a foreign language.

9.3.3 Findings regarding the medium of instruction policy in developing countries

With regard to the medium of instruction in developing countries, the findings are the following:

(i) Most of the African countries whose language situation was studied (Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria (some states), Somalia and Algeria) use the mother tongue as the medium of instruction for the first three to four years in the primary school, with a change to a foreign language between the first and sixth school year.

(ii) A large number of countries (Zambia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Nigeria (some states), Kenya, Cameroon, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey and Togo) use a foreign language as the medium of instruction during the primary phase.

(iii) A few countries (Somalia and Tanzania) change over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction at the start of the secondary school phase.

(iv) Only one country (Sudan) uses the mother tongue as the medium of instruction throughout the school career.

(v) In most countries where a foreign language is used as the medium of instruction, whether from school entrance or after subsequent change-over, the mother tongue is taught as a subject.

In African countries the following problems are encountered in regard to the language situation:

(i) In countries where English is the official language, only a small percentage of the inhabitants can in fact speak English.

(ii) In countries where various languages are spoken, the people have difficulty in communicating with one another.

(iii) The rapid economic and industrial development has had the result that the African languages do not have the vocabulary to accommodate this changing situation.

(iv) The variety of languages that are spoken in a country makes it difficult for the government to administer and govern the land.

(v) It seems that few African languages - especially those in countries where a large variety of languages is spoken - have a developed orthography.

(vi) The provision of education (schools, books, other facilities, training of teachers) for all the language groups, in order to make instruction in the mother tongue possible, involves huge financial expenses.

(vii) Illiteracy in the African countries hampers communication and teaching in a foreign language. Even teaching in the mother tongue is sometimes problematic.

(viii) The low status of the local (indigenous) languages compared with the foreign language (often an international language such as English) threatens the culture of the inhabitants.

9.3.4 Findings in respect of the choice of a medium of instruction

In a multilingual country a decision has to be made regarding the choice of a language as the medium of instruction. When such a decision is made, the role that the mother tongue and the foreign language will fulfil in education should be clearly formulated. According to the relevant literature there are various options for a medium of instruction. The object of the various options is to establish one language as the official language and to retain, as far as possible, the mother tongue as a regional language.

The most important options that can be identified for the medium of instruction can be summarized as follows:

(i) The mother tongue or the foreign language is the medium of instruction and both languages are taught as subjects.

(ii) The mother tongue and the foreign language are the medium of instruction for certain subjects and both languages are taught as subjects.

(iii) The mother tongue and the foreign language are the medium of instruction for certain subjects and at a later stage (from the fourth/fifth school year or at the beginning of the secondary school phase) the foreign language becomes the only medium of instruction. Both languages are taught as subjects.

(iv) The mother tongue is the medium of instruction for the first three or four school years, the foreign language is introduced as a subject and later (fourth or fifth school year) there is a change-over to the foreign language as the medium of instruction.

From the report it appears that the options for the medium of instruction put forward by the United Institute for Namibia (UNIN) should be noted, since they have a bearing on the language situation in SWA/Namibia. UNIN identified two possibilities, namely a twelve-year education system which is typified as the conventional education system and a nine-year system as a basic education system.

As far as the conventional education system is concerned, the following options are proposed for a medium of instruction for the three educational phases:

(i) Junior primary educational phase

* A local language (mother tongue) as the medium of instruction and as a subject with either the phasing in of English as a subject, or English as a subject from the onset of schooling.

* A local language as the medium of instruction and as a subject, and English as a subject.

* A local language as the medium of instruction for two years and thereafter English-medium teaching with the two languages as subjects.

* English as the medium of instruction and as a subject, and the local language as a subject.

(ii) Senior primary educational phase

* A local language as the medium of instruction and as a subject, with English as a subject.

* A local language and English as the medium of instruction for certain subjects with both languages as subjects.

* English as the medium of instruction and as a subject with a local language as a subject.

(iii) Secondary educational phase

* English as the medium of instruction and as a subject with a local language as a subject.

* A local language and English as the medium of instruction for certain subjects with both languages as subjects.

With regard to the nine-year education system, the following options are proposed for the medium of instruction:

(i) A local language as the medium of instruction for the first four or six years with English as the medium of instruction for the final five or three years respectively. Both languages are taught as subjects over the entire nine years.

(ii) A local language and English as the medium of instruction (a mixed language medium) with both languages as subjects for the full nine years.

(iii) English as the medium of instruction for the full nine years with English and a local languages as subjects.

In addition to the options for the medium of instruction proposed in the UNIN Report, the option proposed by Mbamba for Ovambo, Kavango and Caprivi will be mentioned briefly (see Paragraph 5.9). His proposal is that the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction for the first three school years, with a change-over to English as the medium of instruction from the fourth school year. Both languages are to be taught as subjects from the first school year.

Research has shown that in multilingual African countries the proficiency of the various population groups in the foreign language chosen as the medium of instruction (English in the former British colonies and French in the former French colonies) is inadequate,

and that the people have difficulty in communicating in the foreign language. The teachers' inadequate proficiency in the foreign language resulted in unsatisfactory teaching.

9.3.5 Findings in respect of the factors that influence the choice of a policy for the medium of instruction at school

It appears that the most important factors that should be taken into account when formulating a policy regarding the medium of instruction are the following:

(i) The multilingual community's need for one specific language as the medium of instruction at school.

(ii) Pedagogic principles.

(iii) The attitude of teachers, pupils and parents to the language or languages that are selected as the media of instruction.

(iv) The existence of a standard form of orthography in the specific medium/media of instruction.

(v) The medium of instruction should make access to higher education possible.

(vi) The availability of suitable and sufficient school literature.

(vii) The availability of teachers who are trained to teach in the medium of instruction.

(viii) The official language policy of the government.

(ix) The degree to which the population can speak the language selected as the medium of instruction.

(x) The possibility of using the medium/media of instruction for international communication.

(xi) The financial implications that the introduction of the language or languages as the medium of instruction will have.

9.3.6 Findings in respect of the change-over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction

The following two viewpoints were identified regarding the stage at which the mother tongue should be replaced by the foreign language as the medium of instruction:

(i) The change-over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction should not take place before the beginning of the secondary school phase to ensure the establishment of the mother tongue.

(ii) The change-over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction should take place between the second and fourth school year to ensure adequate exposure to the foreign language, which is essential for the learning of the foreign language.

The following two methods of change-over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction were encountered:

(i) A gradual change-over to the foreign language as the medium of instruction, which means that some subjects are taught through the medium of the mother tongue and others through the medium of a foreign language, or that the mother tongue and the foreign language are used jointly as the medium of instruction for every subject.

(ii) An immediate change-over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction for all subjects.

Experiments concerning the change-over to a foreign language as the medium of instruction showed that -

(i) more opportunities for exposure to the foreign language were conducive to learning the foreign language,

(ii) the number of years that pupils were exposed to the foreign language as the medium of instruction determined their success in learning the foreign language,

(iii) regardless of the stage at which the change-over was made to the foreign language as the medium of instruction, the pupils acquired the same proficiency in the foreign language at the end of their primary school career,

(iv) pupils who were taught in their mother tongue for the first six years of primary school performed better scholastically than pupils who were taught in the mother tongue for the first three years only,

(v) well-qualified teachers ensured good scholastic achievement by pupils, as well as language proficiency,

(vi) pupils who had been taught in the mother tongue for the first two years and who thereafter were taught in the foreign language, were personally and socially better adjusted than pupils who had received foreign language instruction from the first school year,

(vii) exposure to a foreign language in the family situation was conducive to learning, and

(viii) in practice, the change-over to a foreign language takes place considerably later than the language policy prescribes, since the pupils do not understand the foreign language and the teachers have inadequate command over the foreign language.

9.3.7 Findings regarding the introduction of a foreign language (second language) as a school subject

From the literature it appears that literacy (speaking, reading and writing) should be attained first in the mother tongue and then in the foreign language, since learning the two simultaneously retards the rate at which learning takes place, and confusion between the languages can result.

The sequence in which the components of language proficiency are introduced when teaching a foreign language as a subject is, firstly, listening and speaking, then reading, followed by written work. (The stage at which the components of language proficiency are introduced during the school years is clarified in point (ii) below, on the basis of research findings.)

There are two viewpoints regarding the stage at which a foreign language should be introduced as a subject, namely early introduction (exposure to the foreign language between the first and the sixth school year) and late introduction (exposure to the foreign language at the beginning of the secondary school stage). Early introduction of the foreign language appears to be favoured more, since it brings about a longer period of exposure to the foreign language which is advantageous for mastering it.

Hypotheses concerned with the stage at which the foreign language is introduced, are the critical period hypothesis and the developmental interdependence hypothesis. The critical period hypothesis considers the period between the age of about two and puberty to be decisive for learning a language. The developmental interdependence hypothesis holds that the level of second language proficiency that a child acquires in a bilingual situation depends on the level of the child's proficiency in the first language at the time intensive exposure to the second language begins.

Experiments to determine the stage at which a foreign language should be introduced at school, brought the following to light:

(i) The amount of time devoted to the foreign language determines the success achieved in learning it. The longer the exposure to the foreign language, the more successful the pupils will be in learning it.

(ii) The teacher's competence in the foreign language as well as his ability to use it as the medium of instruction, determines the pupils' success in learning the foreign language.

Experiments on ways of introducing a foreign language as a subject have revealed the following:

(i) When pupils have to receive instruction in two foreign languages as subjects, it is best to begin with both languages in the first school year.

(ii) Pupils at primary school should begin learning a foreign language by listening, comprehension and speaking as the first step. Reading should be introduced after Standard 1 (in the fourth school year) and writing in the second language should commence a year after reading has begun.

9.4 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions based on the findings of the investigation are the following:

(i) The mother tongue appears to be the desirable medium of instruction for the first four school years at least, since the child's emotional and cognitive development takes place optimally through the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

(ii) In a multilingual country it is essential, particularly in the secondary school, to have one common language as the medium of instruction, with a view to university and other forms of tertiary education as well as the occupational world.

(iii) Although a particular language is the medium of instruction for all the population groups, the mother tongue is retained as the regional or group language and the mother tongue is taught at school up to secondary education level.

(iv) There appears to be certain criteria that decision makers should take into account when deciding on a policy regarding the medium of instruction. It is important to determine, *inter alia*, which language the population groups require as a common medium of instruction and whether they can understand and speak it.

(v) When a foreign language is being considered as a common medium of instruction, it is important to bear in mind the teachers' ability to speak, read and write the foreign language and use it as the medium of instruction, since their proficiency in that language is a precondition for effective teaching. Both the pupils' level of proficiency in the language that is being considered as the common medium of instruction, and their exposure to the foreign language in the community, play a role in their mastery of this language.

(vi) The stage at which the foreign language is introduced as a subject, as well as the manner of change-over from the mother tongue as the medium of instruction to the common (foreign) tongue, appears to be important in the learning of the foreign language as the medium of instruction. (The above refers to the duration of exposure to the foreign language - the longer the pupils are exposed to the foreign language, the more successful they will be in learning it.)

With regard to the language medium situation in SWA/Namibia, Afrikaans and English are, separately or jointly, the media of instruction in the schools of Rehoboth and the Administration for Whites. German is the medium of instruction up to Standard 8 in German schools. It is in respect of the other education authorities and the Department of National Education that the question of the medium of instruction is problematic, since Afrikaans or English becomes the medium of instruction from the fourth school year (in the case of one education authority English is the medium of instruction from the first school year). Since a change will be made to one or other of the official languages as the medium of instruction at some stage, it is important to plan and apply medium of instruction models that make provision for the mother tongue as the medium of instruction for the first three to four school years, with the inclusion of Afrikaans and English as subjects, and for ways of changing over to Afrikaans or English as the medium of instruction. Recommendations will now be made regarding matters that have a bearing on the medium of instruction in SWA/Namibia.

9.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.5.1 Interpretation of the contents of this report

* This report deals with the language situation in developing countries. The problem of multilingualism in respect of a language medium policy for education, transition from the mother tongue to a foreign (second) language as the medium of instruction, the stage at which transition should occur, and the introduction of a foreign language as a subject and the stage at which this should occur, are the topics discussed in the report. Various experiments have been conducted on the influence of the multilingual situation on education with regard to the desirable medium of instruction and the introduction of a foreign language as a subject. The results of these experiments are important because the results could serve as indicators for research on a language medium policy for SWA/Namibia.

* When studying this report, one should bear in mind that it mainly concerns the language situation in African countries as developing countries. Certain non-African countries which also have the problem of a language medium or of the introduction of a foreign language (Philippine Islands (developing country), and Ireland, England, Wales, France, West Germany and Canada as developed countries) are also dealt with in the report because the research undertaken in these countries could possibly have value for the language situation in SWA/Namibia. The only reference to a language medium policy for education in SWA/Namibia in this report is the discussion of the UNIN Report on SWA/Namibia (Paragraph 5.8) and the language medium policy for SWA/Namibia which Mbamba suggests (Paragraph 5.9).

9.5.2 Recommendations concerning a language medium policy for primary school in SWA/Namibia

(1) Explanation

* Language is a primary condition for the development of a child because it is a means through which his intellectual functions find expression and social life develops. When a child starts school he already has a language - his mother tongue - through the medium of which he can be understood, can understand the teacher and communicate with his classmates.

* The teacher instructs a pupil through the medium of language in that with language he unlocks the subject matter for the child and allows him to understand it. The question that arises here, is: What medium of instruction should be used when pupils start school? The answer lies in the results of research conducted in multilingual countries regarding a desirable medium of instruction.

* According to various studies conducted in developing countries, the mother tongue seems to be the most suitable medium of instruction in primary school, because the moulding of mental systems and the expression of concepts is best in the mother tongue. Experiments showed that pupils who changed to a foreign language as the medium of instruction at one or other stage in primary school,

performed more poorly than pupils who were taught through the medium of their mother tongue.

* Another finding was that where the mother tongue was the language medium from the start of education to the third, fourth or fifth school year, the pupils fared better than those pupils who changed to a foreign language as the medium of instruction during those school years. It would seem that pupils should not change to a foreign language as the medium of instruction before the fourth school year.

* The immersion model in Canada (a developed country with French and English as official languages) with the foreign (second) language as the medium of instruction, did not have a negative effect on the first language speakers' (English speakers') cognitive development. Note that in Canada there are close ties between the culture of the two main language groups and that there is a great deal of exposure to both languages.

* The present position in SWA/Namibia is that except for the German-speaking[1], Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking school populations, the mother tongue (African language) is used as the language medium for the other population groups for the first four to five school years and is also presented as a subject (mother tongue). The medium of instruction is one of the official languages (English or Afrikaans) after the first four or five school years, while the other official language is also presented as a subject.

(2) Recommendations

On the strength of research conducted in various countries regarding problems on the medium of instruction and the psychopedagogic, educational, socio-cultural and linguistic arguments surrounding the emotional development of the child, the mother tongue seems to be the desirable medium of instruction at primary school. Since the educational policy of certain education authorities in SWA/Namibia is transition to English or Afrikaans as the medium of instruction from the fourth to the fifth school year, it is recommended -

* that the mother tongue be used as the language medium for the first four school years, and

* that introduction to the official languages during the first four school years, with a view to changing to an official language as the medium of instruction, be meaningfully planned to afford pupils the opportunity of acquiring language proficiency with a view to transition.

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* In German-medium schools the mother tongue (German) is the medium of instruction up to Standard 7. At the beginning of Standard 8 pupils can choose between English and Afrikaans as the medium of instruction.

9.5.3 Recommendations on the transition to one of the official languages as the language medium and the introduction of the official languages as subjects

(1) Explanation

* Research conducted in developing and developed countries that have problems with the medium of instruction, the transition to a second language as the medium of instruction and the introduction of a second language as subject, showed that successful transition to a foreign (second) language as the medium of instruction, is determined by the amount of time that pupils are exposed to the foreign language. Here time means the number of years and periods per day/week for the number of subjects which are taught through the medium of the second language.

* The transition model that appears to be the most significant, is the one in which the mother tongue and the second language are used jointly as the medium of instruction for teaching subject groups, while the two languages are also presented as subjects. Hence pupils' proficiency in their mother tongue is reinforced and exposure to the second language is such that pupils can also master it to the extent that in secondary school they can also be taught through the medium of the second language.

* It would appear from the research in developing countries that transition to a second language as the medium of instruction can occur subject by subject. Transition to a second language as the medium of instruction can also take place over a specific period (a certain number of school years). These methods of transition to a second language afford pupils the opportunity of reinforcing their mother tongue and second language skills.

(2) Recommendations

(a) The first recommendation is that a transition model (transition from the mother tongue to the second language as the medium of instruction) should be planned so that it can be implemented from the fifth school year in the primary schools of the education authorities of the indigenous nations whose mother tongue is neither English nor Afrikaans.

(b) The second recommendation is that the mother tongue and the second language which is going to be the medium of instruction in secondary school be used jointly, subject by subject, as media of instruction and also be presented as subjects to ensure exposure to both languages.

(c) As far as introducing the second language (Afrikaans or English) in the first four years of school (as preparation for the transition model in the fifth year of school) is concerned, the amount of time devoted to exposure to the second language determines the success of acquisition of the second language. The following methods of introducing the second language (the ultimate medium of instruction) in the first four years of school is put forward for consideration:

(i) Except for the mother tongue and the second languages presented as subjects and Bible Studies, all other subjects are presented in both the mother tongue (50 % of the time) and the second language (50 % of the time) during the first three years of school. During the fourth year of school only one third of the time (lesson period) is devoted to the mother tongue as medium of instruction in the subjects mentioned.

(ii) Except for the mother tongue and the second language presented as subjects, all other subjects are taught through the medium of the mother tongue in the first three years of school. In the fourth school year the subjects are presented through the medium of the mother tongue and the second language (the ultimate medium of instruction in secondary school). The second language is used as the medium of instruction for the subjects for one-third of a lesson period.

(iii) All subjects, except for the mother tongue, the second language and Bible Studies, are presented through the medium of the mother tongue and second language (English or Afrikaans) for the first four school years. The second language is used as the medium of instruction for the subjects for two-thirds and the mother tongue for one-third of the lesson period.

(iv) In primary school where the composition of pupils represents a number of mother tongues, and it is impossible to use the mother tongues as the media of instruction in the same class, all subjects are taught through the medium of the second language of which the majority of children have a knowledge (immersion model). If possible, the mother tongue is presented as a subject.

(d) As far as the introduction of oral, reading and written work is concerned, it is recommended that the authorities should decide how this should be dealt with in a responsible manner according to models (i) to (iv).

9.5.4 Recommendations regarding the teachers' share in instruction through the medium of the mother tongue and the second language

(1) Although teachers know their mother tongue and are able to use it as the medium of instruction, it is still recommended that they undergo refresher courses (in-service training courses) to enable them to fulfil their educational task effectively through the medium of their mother tongue.

(2) As far as use of the second language as the medium of instruction and presentation of the third language are concerned, it is recommended that teachers' language skill in the second and third language be improved on a continuous basis by means of special courses.

(Research on the medium of instruction in multilingual African countries showed that the upgrading of the teachers' second language competency is a matter of great importance. The research showed that teachers whose foreign language competency is insufficient, cannot successfully use the foreign language as the medium of instruction.)

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9.5.5 Recommendations concerning the third language at school

As far as the third language (Afrikaans or English) is concerned, it is recommended that the authorities should decide on the objective of third language instruction - especially whether or not it is only to be a means of communication (functional language).

9.5.6 Recommendation concerning a language medium policy for education

Since the future of children as well as that of the country's present and future development is at stake here, when choosing a language medium policy, it is recommended that decision-makers at all levels of control should find answers to at least the following questions before deciding:

(i) Which language or languages makes or make communication possible in the occupational world?

(ii) Which official language (Afrikaans or English) is used most in a specific region?

(iii) Which official language in a region is understood and spoken by the people?

(iv) Is it important for the people to be able to speak, read and write their mother tongue?

(v) Which official language or languages, which makes/make communication possible, does/do the population need?

(vi) Which official language/languages does/do the population have a need for when it comes to all forms of postschool education (university, college, technikon and non-formal teacher training)?

9.5.7 Research to determine the desirable medium of instruction

Even if a language medium model is well planned, its success depends on its practical application. In other words, the success of the model can only be determined by testing it in practice. Research undertaken in developing countries to determine the desirable medium of instruction in education, has provided empirical data on the strength of which decision-makers can formulate a medium of instruction.

(1) Recommendations

(a) A longitudinal study is being conducted to determine the desirable medium of instruction for education.

(b) This longitudinal study is being conducted jointly by the Institute for Educational Research, the Department of National Education and other authorities.

(c) An experiment which is being conducted with the different mother tongues and official languages as the medium of instruction from

Substandard A to Standard 5 (starting with the study in Substandard A) will be evaluated, as pupils of the experimental and control classes progress from Substandard A to the higher classes to determine their scholastic progress. The aim of the experiment is also to establish whether or not the medium of instruction has an effect on their scholastic progress.

(d) The control schools follow the present language medium policy of the education authorities involved in the experiment (see Appendix A).

(e) The experimental schools can be involved in the study according to the following models (see Appendixes B to E):

* Model 1: Except for the mother tongue and second language presented as subjects and Bible Studies, all other subjects for the first three years of school (starting with Substandard A) are presented jointly through the medium of the mother tongue and the second language (the medium of instruction in secondary school). In each lesson period, the mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction for half the time, and the second language for the other half.

* Model 2: Except for the mother tongue, second language and third language presented as subjects and Bible Studies, all the other subjects are taught jointly through the medium of the second language (75 % of each lesson period) and the mother tongue (25 % of each lesson period) for the first four years of school, starting in Substandard A.

* Model 3: During the first three years of school, starting in Substandard A, all subjects except for the second language, are taught through the medium of the mother tongue. In the fourth school year, the subjects are jointly presented through the medium of the mother tongue (three-quarters of the time) and the second language (one-quarter of the time). The third language is presented (as a subject) through the medium of the third language.

* Model 4: During the first four years of school, starting in Substandard A, all the subjects, except for the mother tongue, second and third language, Bible Studies and Environmental Studies, are presented through the medium of the second language.

(f) The use until the end of primary school of the models that indicate the media of instruction up to Standard 2 will be determined by the results of the language medium models obtained in practice.

Hence the recommendation is that the medium of instruction for Standard 3 to 5 be studied with the aid of the results of the longitudinal study.

(2) Requirements that should be satisfied if the study is to be undertaken responsibly and successfully over a period of three to five years

In order to select the classes which are going to take part in the study, and to conduct the research in a accountable manner, it is necessary to acquire educational statistics for the primary school phase of the education authorities. When selecting schools, the following requirements should be considered:

(a) The learning contents (subject matter for all the subjects) will have to be standardised in all the languages for all the class groups and made available in all the relevant languages. In other words, the same core contents of the subjects should be available or be made available in Substandard A and in the higher classes, as Substandard A pupils progress to the higher classes. Thus the subject matter can be a constant factor in the study - this is especially important for evaluation.

(b) To ensure that the Substandard A pupils of both the experimental and control groups (as far as possible) achieve the same level of school readiness before starting formal education, the school readiness programme should be implemented in all classes. The reading and language readiness programme should be used to prepare pupils who take the particular languages as subjects, for learning the languages concerned so that they can successfully start formal education in these subjects. Teachers who are not familiar with the readiness programme will have to be trained in the application of the programme.

(c) The class groups should, over a period of three to five years and possible even longer, be kept reasonably small (± 30) and about the same size.

(d) Classes should be selected from a homogeneous language group and from a language environment where the daily influence of other languages involved in the experiment is about the same.

(e) The ages of the pupils in these class groups should be approximately the same and the two sexes should be in about the same ratio.

(f) The level of experience and training and the proven teaching proficiency of all the teachers who are going to participate in the experiment should be approximately the same. This applies especially in respect of teachers' language proficiency in the medium of instruction concerned.

(g) The instruction time for each subject must be the same for all groups. (Research has shown that the duration of exposure to second languages presented as media of instruction or as subjects in particular, plays a role in acquisition of language skill.)

(h) Class groups must be selected from communities whose socio-economic standard of living and exposure or introduction to the other languages is approximately the same.

(i) **Test and examinations must be compiled for all classes.** This means that a panel comprising experts from the education authorities will have to compile tests and examinations to be written by the experimental and control classes.

9.5.8 Language planning

The problems surrounding the choice of a medium of instruction can be studied from various perspectives. Although in this report on the choice of a medium of instruction reference is made to various disciplines the study of the relevant literature was undertaken mainly from an educational viewpoint. Language planning as a field of sociolinguistics furnishes a further important framework for approaching the problem of a medium of instruction.

(1) The concept of language planning

Language planning is described as a multifaceted matter, and a methodical activity by means of which existing languages are regulated and improved, and new common regional, national or international languages created. Language planning is also seen as the organized pursuance of solutions to language problems. Another meaning attached to language planning is planning for the challenges that the future poses for a language (Erasmus 1987: 183). From the foregoing definition language planning appears to be an activity directed at the solution of language problems.

(2) Categories of language problems

The solution of language problems demands that they be categorized into distinct problem areas. In this way effective language planning can be directed at the solving of specific language problems.

Paulston (Erasmus 1987: 183) identifies two categories of language problems, namely problems that affect the language itself and language problems that are symptoms of social and cultural problems.

Fishman (Erasmus 1987: 183) distinguishes the following four categories of language problems:

(i) The problem of selecting a language refers to the choice of a language as an official language or as a medium of instruction.

(ii) The problem of standardizing a language refers to the stabilization of a language so that it can function *inter alia* as a written language.

(iii) The problem of language development refers to the development and refinement of a language to enable it to fulfil higher functions, for example to use the language as a medium for technical and scientific publications.

(iv) The problem of language acquisition refers to functional language differentiation, which is related to correct usage and style.

It is evident that the above categories of language problems apply, to a greater or lesser degree, to the problem of the medium of instruction in SWA/Namibia. As far as Paulston's two categories of language problems are concerned, his category of problems affecting the language itself refers to some of the mother tongues (African mother tongues) in SWA/Namibia, whose orthographies have not yet been fully developed. His second category, language problems as symptoms of social and cultural problems, can refer to the value that the community attaches to retaining the mother tongue as the medium of instruction and cultural transference. When Fishman's categories are related to Paulston's, Fishman's category the problem of choosing a language has relevance to Paulston's categories of problems affecting the language itself and language problems as symptoms of social and cultural problems. The categories, problems of standardizing the language and developing the language, relate to Paulston's category problems that affect the language itself.

Since SWA/Namibia is a multilingual country, the population groups retain their languages as colloquial languages, the mother tongues are the medium of instruction in the schools of some of the education authorities, the mother tongues are offered as subjects and one of the official languages is the medium of instruction from Standard 2, it is not surprising that there are language problems in SWA/Namibia. The classification of the language problems according to specific categories is essential to get a grip on the problems surrounding the choice of a medium of instruction with a view to language planning.

(3) A model for language planning

Language planning as methodological activity comprises various phases and Rubin's planning model (see Erasmus 1987: 183), which has four phases, is given here as an example.

(a) Phase 1: Situation analysis: A situation analysis undertaken by means of a study of the relevant literature, empirical investigation and pilot projects, can reflect the language needs of a community (the various population groups in SWA/Namibia). The language planner will need to find answers to questions such as the following: Has the language in question been standardized to function as an educational language (a medium of instruction)? Does the mother tongue user want the mother tongue to be the medium of instruction? Does the mother tongue user want the mother tongue to be taught at school? Would a language that has become the medium of instruction as a result of political considerations be acceptable to all population groups? What roles do the various mother tongues play in the community? (These questions, which should be answered by means of a situation analysis, are associated with the factors that influence the choice of a medium of instruction at school, as mentioned in Chapter 6.)

When a situation analysis is planned, the functions that a language in a country (or languages in a multilingual country) should fulfil, should be determined to make the role of a language (or languages) in a country recognisable. According to Stewart (1970: 54) a language can fulfil one or more of the following functions:

(i) Official language of the country
(ii) Provincial language (regional language)
(iii) Language for wider communication
(iv) International language
(v) Language used in the environment of the capital city
(vi) Group language
(vii) Medium of instruction
(viii) School subject
(ix) Literary language
(x) Religious language

On the basis of the functions of a language (languages in a multilingual country), the situation analysis will indicate the language need(s) of the population groups in a country.

(b) **Phase 2: Determination of goals and objectives:** The language needs and/or language problems that have been identified by the situation analysis, make it possible to formulate goals for language planning and objectives that need to be operationalized to realize the language planning goals. Plans of action (strategies) are formulated to realize the objectives.

(c) **Phase 3: Implementation:** The implementation phase means the incorporation of the plans of action as activities aimed at realizing the language planning objectives in order to achieve the language planning goals. The implementation phase demands language planning management, which involves financial and staff planning as well as supervision of language planning activities.

(d) **Phase 4: Evaluation:** The implementation of action plans (strategies) is continuously monitored to determine whether the objectives are realized and the goals attained. Evaluation can bring new language problems to light which will put the language planning cycle in respect of these language problems into operation.

The above language planning model indicates that language planning is a methodical activity directed at solving language problems. If a multilingual country wishes to resolve its language problems responsibly, it will have to undertake language planning.

(4) Recommendation

This report demonstrates that various factors including the following, need to be taken into consideration when choosing a medium of instruction in a multilingual country:

(i) Specific criteria for the choice of the medium of instruction,

(ii) the function of the mother tongue in both the school and the community,

(iii) the stage at which the foreign language should be introduced at school,

(iv) the manner in which the change-over from the mother tongue to the foreign language as the medium of instruction takes place, and

(v) the language proficiency of the teachers in the presentation of a foreign language both as a subject and as the medium of instruction.

According to the exposition of the language problems that can be solved through language planning, the above factors - which are related to the choice of a medium of instruction - should receive attention in language planning. Language planning can be seen as a research activity investigating the language situation in a country. In SWA/Namibia, as a multilingual country, language planning should be one facet of educational planning to ensure that the language policy is related to the language situation of the country. Although a language situation analysis was conducted in SWA/Namibia at the beginning of the eighties (Prinsloo and Stoker 1982: Parts 1 to 13), the situation has changed since 1982 and more recent data are required.

The recommendation is that education departments should undertake co-ordinated language planning to deal more effectively with problems related to language in education, particularly in regard to matters such as the following:

(i) the medium of instruction policy,
(ii) the place of a second and third language in the curriculum,
(iii) language development, and
(iv) the improvement of teachers' linguistic proficiency.

9.6 CONCLUDING REMARK

The authors trust that this report will throw light on factors that relate to the language medium (medium of instruction) problem in multilingual countries, as well as factors that should be noted when choosing a language medium policy. The report clearly indicates that the language medium in the education of a multilingual country is a complex issue and that it is no easy task when deciding on a language medium that will benefit the child and the country's progress.

CONTROL GROUP (PRESENT SITUATION)

APPENDIX A

CLASS/ STANDARD	MOTHER TONGUE	SECOND LANGUAGE	THIRD LANGUAGE	MATHE-MATICS	ENVIR. STUDIES, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, SCIENCE	WRITING	RELI-GIOUS INSTRUC-TION	ART	PHYSICAL EDUCA-TION	MUSIC
SUB. A	G.P. V	G.P. VH		G.P. MM	MM	G.P. MM	MM	G.P. MM	G.P. MM	MM
SUB. B	V	V VH	G.P. VH	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM
STD. 1	V	V MLS	VH	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM
STD. 2	V	V	V	T2	T2	T2	MM	T2	T2	T2
STD. 3	V	V	V	T2	T2	T2	MM	T2	T2	T2
STD. 4	V	V	V	T2	T2	T2	MM	T2	T2	T2

V = subject
H = oral work
L = reading
S = written work
MM = medium mother tongue
T2 = second language (medium)
GP = Readiness programme

MODEL 1: EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

APPENDIX B

CLASS/ STANDARD	MOTHER TONGUE	SECOND LANGUAGE	THIRD LANGUAGE	MATHE-MATICS	ENVIR. STUDIES, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, SCIENCE	WRITING	RELI-GIOUS INSTRUC-TION	ART	PHYSICAL EDUCA-TION	MUSIC
	G.P.	G.P.		G.P.		G.P.		G.P.	G.P.	
SUB. A	V	VM		MM / T2	MM	MM	MM	MM / T2	MM / T2	MM / T2
SUB. B	V	V ML	G.P.	MM / T2	MM / T2	MM / T2	MM	MM / T2	MM / T2	MM / T2
STD. 1	V	V MLS		MM / T2	MM / T2	MM / T2	MM	MM / T2	MM / T2	MM / T2
STD. 2	V	V	V	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM
STD. 3	V	V	V	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM
STD. 4	V	V	V	T2	T2	T2	MM	T2	T2	T2

V = subject
M = oral work
L = reading
S = written work
MM = medium mother tongue
T2 = second language (medium)
GP = Readiness programme

Continuation in the fifth and sixth school year will be determined by means of research

MODEL 2: EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

APPENDIX C

CLASS/ STANDARD	MOTHER TONGUE	SECOND LANGUAGE	THIRD LANGUAGE	MATHE-MATICS	ENVIR. STUDIES, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, SCIENCE	WRITING	RELI-GIOUS INSTRUC-TION	ART	PHYSICAL EDUCA-TION	MUSIC
	G.P.	G.P.		G.P.		G.P.		G.P.	G.P.	
SUB. A	V MLS	VM		T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM
SUB. B	V	V MLS	G.P.	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM
STD. 1	V	V MLS		T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM
STD. 2	V	V	V	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM
STD. 3	V	V	V	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM
STD. 4	V	V	V	T2	T2	T2	MM	T2	T2	T2

V = subject L = reading MM = medium mother tongue GP = Readiness programme
M = oral work S = written work T2 = second language (medium)
Continuation in the fifth and sixth school year will be determined by means of research

MODEL 3: EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

APPENDIX D

CLASS/ STANDARD	MOTHER TONGUE	SECOND LANGUAGE	THIRD LANGUAGE	MATHE-MATICS	ENVIR. STUDIES, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, SCIENCE	WRITING	RELI-GIOUS INSTRUC-TION	ART	PHYSICAL EDUCA-TION	MUSIC
	G.P.	G.P.		G.P.		G.P.		G.P.	G.P.	
SUB. A	V	VM		MM	MM	MM	MM	MM	T2 / MM	MM
SUB. B	V	V MLS		MM	MM	MM	MM	MM	T2 / MM	MM
STD 1	V	V MLS		MM	MM	MM	MM	MM	T2 / MM	MM
STD 2	V	V	G.P. V	MM / T2	T2 / MM	MM / T2	MM	MM / T2	MM / T2	MM / T2
STD 3	V	V	V	MM / T2	T2 / MM	MM / T2	MM	MM / T2	MM / T2	MM / T2
STD 4	V	V	V	T2 / MM	T2	MM / T2	MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM	T2 / MM

V = subject L = reading MM = medium mother tongue GP = Readiness programme
M = oral work S = written work T2 = second language (medium)

· Continuation in the fifth and sixth school year will be determined by means of research

MODEL 4: EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

APPENDIX E

CLASS/ STANDARD	MOTHER TONGUE	SECOND LANGUAGE	THIRD LANGUAGE	MATHE-MATICS	ENVIR. STUDIES, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, SCIENCE	WRITING	RELI-GIOUS INSTRUC-TION	ART	PHYSICAL EDUCA-TION	MUSIC
	G.P.	G.P.		G.P.		G.P.		G.P.	G.P.	
SUB. A	VM	VM		T2	MM	T2	MM	T2	T2	T2
SUB. B	V	V ML		T2	MM	T2	MM	T2	T2	T2
STD.1	V	V MLS		T2	MM	T2	MM	T2	T2	T2
STD.2	V	V	G.P. V	T2	T2	T2	MM	T2	T2	T2
STD.3	V	V	V	T2	T2	T2	MM	T2	T2	T2
STD.4	V	V	V	T2	T2	T2	MM	T2	T2	T2

V = subject L = reading MM = medium mother tongue GP = Readiness programme
M = oral work S = written work T2 = second language (medium)
Continuation in the fifth and sixth school year will be determined by means of research

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